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Who are the Waiting Children?

An overview of the adoption services system in the Massachusetts Department of Social Services

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PREFACE

This report focuses upon adoption services provided by the Massachusetts Department of Social Services. These services should be viewed as one end of a continuum of services to families and children which reflect the agency's basic philosophy of family preservation. Family preservation entails a commitment to support families, to treat the family as a unit, and to organize services which will permit parents to rear their own children in safe and healthy family environments. DSS has begun to develop a broad spectrum of home-based services designed to prevent unnecessary out-of-home placements, whenever possible. That is one end of the family preservation services continuum. At the other end are adoption services for those children whose parents have proved to be incapable of caring for them. These are children for whom DSS must create new families. This too is family preservation.

Consistent with Commissioner Gerald W. Robinson's emphasis upon family preservation, the Department has renewed its commitment to permanency planning for all children who enter placement. Broadly and properly conceived, permanency planning includes clear, goal-directed casework designed to ensure that placement does not become an end in itself and that children spend as short a time as possible in state custody living in temporary care. The Commissioner has created a new Permanency Planning Unit in the DSS Central Office. This report, focusing upon adoption services, is the first product of this new unit and is intended to improve the quality of permanency planning throughout DSS.

Adoption is one permanency planning outcome for children in DSS custody. It is an outcome that should involve no more than 20% to 25% of all children who enter placement. Most children in placement, 65% to 70%, will return to their families of origin. As adoption services begin to improve, DSS must also renew its efforts to ensure permanency planning which enables parents to resume care of their own children as quickly as possible. And for those children who cannot return home, there must be a full range of alternatives in addition to adoption: kinship care, guardianship, long-term supportive living, transition to adult services, and independent living options.

A public child welfare agency is not and cannot be a good parent. Children who spend long periods of time in temporary placement, without permanence, are inevitably damaged. The DSS emphasis upon family preservation entails a commitment to support parents in caring for their own children and a like commitment to create for children permanent families in which they may experience love, security, and stability.

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2. Data regarding adoptions completed by DSS.
3. Data regarding available approved pre-adoptive families.
4. Data regarding DSS legal workload for adoption cases.
5. DSS adoption workload and current allocation of staff.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Major Findings

* An inventory of children in the adoption process, begun in September, 1991, by the 26 DSS area offices and 12 contracted adoption agencies has identified a total of 3553 children in DSS custody who are waiting to be adopted.

* A separate inventory of available prospective pre-adoptive families identified a total of 353 approved pre-adoptive families in the DSS adoption services system who are awaiting the placement of children in their homes.

* The number of children who are in DSS custody waiting to be adopted is increasing at the rate of 900 children per year. DSS currently processes new adoption referrals involving 1450 children per year. The total output of the DSS adoption services system, including DSS area offices and private social service agencies who provide adoption placement services under contract with the Department, is 500-550 completed adoptions per year.

* Thirty percent of the 3553 children in the DSS adoption process are legally free for adoption. Nearly 2200 children are awaiting the completion of legal action to terminate parental rights, or are awaiting the filing of such cases in the Probate Courts.

* Of a total of 12,337 children under age 18 in DSS-funded placements in September, 1991, 29% were children waiting to be adopted.

* At an average annual cost of $10,300 per child, DSS now spends more than $36.5 million per year in services for children who might otherwise live in permanent adoptive homes.

At the present time, many children who are adopted through DSS spend six years or more---one third of their childhoods--in temporary foster homes waiting to be adopted. If DSS is unable to complete more adoptions in a timely manner, children will spend even longer in temporary state custody and many hundreds of children will not be adopted but will grow to adulthood as wards of the state without permanent homes.

There are three major barriers to the timely completion of an adoption:

* the length of time required to identify an appropriate pre-adoptive home for a child and the lack of any viable alternative permanent homes for many children in the DSS adoption process;

* the length of time required to complete the legal process to terminate biological parents' rights and the growing backlog of these cases which are being handled by DSS attorneys;

* the length of time required to prepare the child, with the active assistance of the child's foster parents, for placement in a permanent adoptive home and to provide supportive services after placement to the new adoptive family prior to the legalization of the adoption.

Each of these barriers will be discussed in detail in this report.

Major Recommendations

1. The Department of Social Services must triple the current output of its adoption services system and complete 1400-1500 adoptions per year. This level of output is required to keep pace with the current rate of new adoption referrals and to begin to reduce the numbers of children who are already waiting to be adopted.

2. The Department should initiate a statewide adoption recruitment campaign which is targeted to identify families who are interested in adopting minority children, children in sibling groups, older children, and children with special needs. DSS should establish the objective of recruiting 700-800 new prospective adoptive families each year.

3. DSS should employ social workers whose full-time job duties involve the recruitment and training of pre-adoptive families and the matching of these families with children who need placement in adoptive homes.

4. The Department should add attorneys, paralegals, and clerical staff to its Legal Division. The output of the legal system must be increased to complete 750-800 termination of parental rights cases per year, freeing 1350-1400 children to be adopted.

5. The Department should clarify its definition of an adoption case and establish uniform statewide procedures for the assignment of such cases. All adoption cases should be assigned to designated adoption social workers and DSS should utilize a dual-assignment system for these cases. In a dual-assignment system the ongoing social worker retains responsibility for services to biological parents, until parental rights are terminated, while a separate adoption social worker assumes responsibility for effecting the placement of the children in a pre-adoptive home. The implementation of a dual-assignment system would require increases in the present staffing level of DSS.

6. DSS should revise its current method of purchasing adoption placement services from private social service agencies. In FY93, the Department should develop and implement a system of performance-based contracts which reimburse private social service agencies for completing adoptions rather than for carrying adoption cases.

7. The Department should establish output objectives for all units within the adoption services system. The Department can establish realistic targets based upon availability of resources regarding numbers of newly-recruited pre-adoptive families, completion of adoption legal cases, placements of children in pre-adoptive homes, and legalization of adoptions each year. These objectives should be monitored regularly and management action taken whenever possible to address barriers to the accomplishment of objectives.

8. The Department should redesign its current computerized adoption tracking system to provide timely and accurate information about children in the DSS adoption services system. This redesign should include the development of new management reports which permit the tracking of individual cases and an overview of the status of all children in the adoption process.

9. The timely completion of adoptions should become a priority of the Department of Social Services. A major emphasis of DSS staff at all levels of the agency should be upon minimizing the length of time children spend in temporary state custody. To accomplish this objective, the Department must increase the number of viable permanency planning alternatives for all children in DSS custody.

Full implementation of this report's recommendations would add 29 staff members to recruit pre-adoptive families at a total annual cost of $822,900 and 19 legal personnel at a total annual cost of $692,100. Depending upon the method used to implement case assignments to designated social workers, DSS would add 25 to 50 new social work positions at an added annual cost of $675,000 to $1,412,600. DSS can produce some increases in the output of the adoption services system by more efficient use of existing resources. To triple the output of the adoption services system, however, will require the infusion of additional staff and additional funding.

The investment of additional state and Federal funding in adoption services will generate, over time, two important dividends. It is impossible to assign a dollar value to the human dividend which is realized when children are able to grow up in stable, loving, permanent adoptive homes. These are children given a much greater opportunity to become healthy and productive adults who will be better able to raise their own children without state assistance or intervention. One can, however, quantify the value of the second dividend which consists of savings in state expenditures. These savings occur in two forms: reductions in direct expenditures as children leave DSS-funded placements to enter adoptive families; and savings in staff resources as cases are closed at the completion of the adoption process. A more detailed discussion of the potential value of these savings is presented in the ninth section of this report.

DSS must act quickly to improve the operation of its adoption services system because the number of children within the system is constantly increasing. Approximately 125 children are referred for adoption within DSS each month; 40-50 adoptions are completed by DSS each month. If DSS does not significantly increase the output of its adoption services system, there will be more than 4400 children in state custody waiting to be adopted at the end of 1992 and more than 5000 children awaiting adoption at the end of 1993.

-INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW-

The adoption services system in the Massachusetts Department of Social Services is approaching a state of crisis. New referrals of children to be adopted are three times greater than the number of children who are adopted each year. Completion of the legal action required to free a child for adoption in most cases now takes two years or more. DSS has few available pre-adoptive homes for the types of children who are awaiting to be adopted. Within the past five years a backlog has developed including more than 3500 children waiting to be adopted. This backlog is growing at the rate of 900 children per year.

The existence of large numbers of children without family ties in state custody is not a new phenomenon. National attention during the 1970's focused upon "foster care drift"---thousands of children in the custody of public child welfare agencies who had lost contact with their families of origin, and who would grow up as public wards. In a national study entitled "Children Without Homes", the Children's Defense Fund established that in the mid-1970's there were more than 350,000 children "lost" in the public child welfare system throughout the United States. Several Federally-funded demonstration projects, conducted during the 1970's, developed the basic concepts of permanency planning which were then embodied in the Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act of 1980 (Public Law 96-272). PL96-272 remains in effect and establishes the basic conditions which states must meet in order to receive Federal financial reimbursement for adoption, foster care, and other child welfare services.

Governor Francis W. Sargent, in 1971, appointed a Commission on Adoption and Foster Care to measure the scope of this problem in Massachusetts. Many of the recommendations of that Governor's Commission and of a later legislative study entitled "The Children's Puzzle" were implemented in the late 1970's leading to the establishment of the Department of Social Services in 1980 as a separate state agency.

Although there have been many significant improvements in the Massachusetts foster care system during the past decade, little attention has been given to publicly-funded adoption services. This study, conducted at the direction of DSS Commissioner Gerald W. Robinson, is the first attempt since 1971 to count the total number of children in Massachusetts awaiting adoption and to provide a comprehensive overview of the DSS adoption service system.

This study utilizes data gathered from several different sources. Information about children in the DSS adoption process and about approved pre- adoptive families was provided by manual inventories conducted during the fall of 1991 by the 26 DSS area offices and 12 private social service agencies who have adoption contracts with DSS. Other data sources include reports prepared by the DSS Research, Evaluation and Planning Unit, the DSS Staffing Analysis Unit, and Administrative Services Division. Data sources are identified at the beginning of each set of tables in the Appendix.

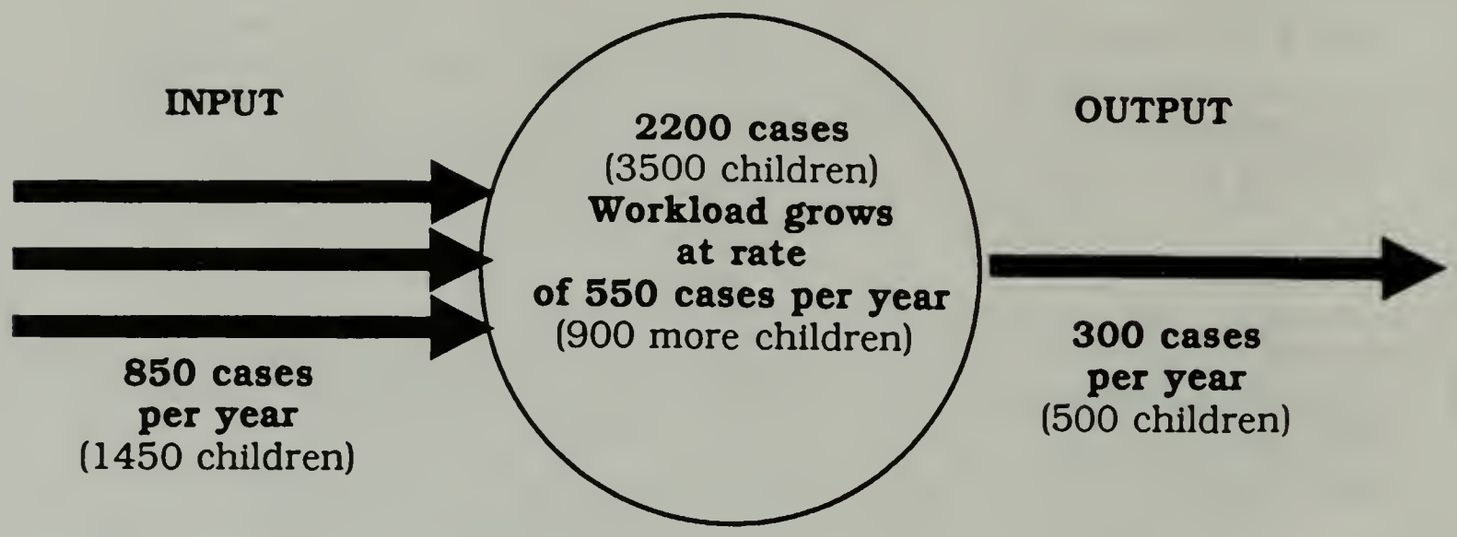
In this document the term "waiting children" is used to refer to children for whom the Department of Social Services has established a goal of adoption. These are children who may be at any point in the adoption process from the initial clinical and legal conferences at which the goal of adoption is first established to the point of final legalization of a child's adoption in Probate Court. These are children who are waiting for the completion of a complex process. Many are waiting for the completion of the legal action to terminate parental rights. Others are waiting for the identification of appropriate pre-adoptive homes. Some are living with their eventual adoptive families waiting only for the final legalization of their adoptions.

This study has been conducted primarily for use within the Department of Social Services. The report narrative has been written, however, to be easily understood by a reader who is not familiar with the operations of DSS or knowledgeable about adoption services. Wherever possible the use of jargon, acronyms and technical terms is avoided. Brief descriptions of adoption activities are presented for readers who may be unfamiliar with this topic. The report is organized into sections each of which examines one component of the DSS adoption services system. Findings and factual data are presented at the beginning of each section. Recommendations are presented at the end of each section and clearly labeled as such. The cost of implementing specific recommendations is presented when applicable.

Overview of adoption process

Persons performing these adoption activities	
Social Workers DSS & private agencies	▲ Continuing services to biological parents and continuing visitation
Attorneys/Legal Staff DSS only	▲ Legal action to free child for adoption: voluntary surrender or court action to terminate parental rights
Recruitment Staff & Adoption Social Workers DSS, private agencies, MARE & media	▲ Recruitment/identification of pre-adoptive families ▲ Child-specific recruitment ▲ Training prospective adoptive families ▲ Matching families with children who need placement
Social Workers DSS & private agencies	▲ Preparation of child and family for placement ▲ Placement of child with family ▲ Supportive services after placement
Attorneys and/or Adoption Workers DSS & private agencies	▲ Legalization of adoption in Probate Court
Social Workers specialized agencies	▲ Post-adoption services to adoptees and adoptive families

Current Adoption Workload Volumes



OBSERVATION: Adoption system output must triple to equal the current input volume. DSS must complete three times as many adoptions each year to keep pace with the current volume of new adoption referrals received each year.

OBSERVATION: At the present input rate, the output must more than triple to begin to reduce the backlog of adoption cases already in process. DSS must complete more than 1450 adoptions per year before it begins to reduce the total of 3500 children who are waiting to be adopted.

OBSERVATION: If all adoption referrals were stopped (obviously impossible), at the present output rate it would take seven years to complete the adoptions of all children who are already in the adoption process.

WHO ARE THE WAITING CHILDREN?

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

* An inventory of children in the DSS adoption process, conducted during the fall of 1991, has identified 3553 children in DSS custody waiting to be adopted.

* The population of waiting children included 1185 individual children and 2368 children in 879 sibling groups.

* The population of waiting children included 852 children with serious physical, intellectual, or emotional handicaps.

* There were 732 children under the age two waiting to be adopted and 733 children age ten and older.

* Forty-five percent of the waiting children were white and 55% were non-white.

* Of the total of 3553 children in the DSS adoption process:

  - 777 (22%) were placed in pre-adoptive homes and were legally free to be adopted;

  - 1125 (32%) were placed in pre-adoptive homes but were not yet legally free to be adopted;

  - 218 (6%) were legally free to be adopted but had not yet been placed in pre-adoptive homes;

  - 527 (15%) were not yet legally free to be adopted and had not yet been placed in pre-adoptive homes.

  - Information on <u>both</u> the current placement and legal status was not specified for 906 children in the adoption process.

Children in the caseloads of public and private adoption agencies in Massachusetts and throughout the United States today are very different from the types of children who were adopted during the 1960's and 1970's. During those decades most adoptions were of healthy newborns and infants, many of who were voluntarily placed for adoption. The social theory which underlay adoption practice until the mid-1970's was environmentalist: if a healthy family environment could be created for a child through adoption, the child would develop normally without any special problems. The primary client in the adoption process during these earlier decades was not the child, but the childless couple who were seeking to establish a family of their own. Today there are fewer healthy newborns and infants available for adoption through domestic adoption agencies. The availability of abortion as an option for women and changing social attitudes regarding single parenting and adolescent parenting have resulted in many less children being voluntarily placed for adoption. Most of the children in the adoption process today entered the child welfare system as a result of protective services initiated to remove these children from dangerous and damaging family environments.

The needs of the child to be adopted rather than the needs of the childess couple are now the primary focus of adoption practice. This important change occurred during the mid-1970's as adoption social workers began to recognize that, to use Bettelheim's classic title, "love is not enough." Given the amount of trauma, deprivation and loss experienced by these children, changing the family environent by itself is insufficient to mitigate the emotional damage which may have occurred as a result of these prior life experiences. Adoption social workers now seek to identify pre-adoptive families whom they feel are best able to meet the child's needs and who can tolerate the types of behavioral problems which will be manifested by children who have experienced extensive trauma and loss prior to adoption. Adoption social workers also recognize that even the most careful matching of a child with a pre-adoptive family, and extensive preparation of the child and family, does not guarantee that the adopted child and adoptive family will not experience serious problems after the adoption has occurred.

Most of the children in the DSS adoption process first came to the attention of the Department through protective service investigations for physical abuse, sexual abuse, severe neglect, or abandonment. In each case the child was first placed in temporary foster care while a DSS social worker attempted to help the child's parents overcome those problems which had necessitated removal of the child from the biological family. In most cases, after 18 months or more of unsuccessful efforts to rehabilitate the parents, the DSS social worker recommended that the Department initiate action to terminate parental rights and seek to have the child adopted. That recommendation was reviewed in two separate conferences---a clinical conference and a legal conference---to confirm that there was little likelihood of rehabilitating the parents and that the Department had sufficient evidence of parental unfitness to seek termination of parental rights. In all cases, an independent review conducted by the DSS Foster Care Review Unit confirmed the appropriateness of adoption as the child's service plan goal. Most children who are now awaiting adoption were in temporary foster care for 18 to 24 months before DSS initiated the adoption process.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Adoption services should become a major priority of the Department of Social Services. One of the Department's most important objectives should be to minimize the length of time children spend in temporary state custody. For children who are to be adopted, the adoption should be completed in as short a period of time as possible without compromising quality practice and thoughtful decision-making. DSS staff members at all levels of the agency should be aware of their own contributions to the accomplishment of this objective.

2. DSS managers both in the Central Office and in the area offices differ greatly in their knowledge of adoption practice and in their experience with adoption services. DSS managers have many different philosophical viewpoints about adoption and these

differences are reflected in differing adoption practices in the 26 DSS area offices. To establish a more unified agency adoption philosophy and to ensure adoption practice of uniform quality, the Department should conduct a series of management discussions regarding adoption services. Such discussions could be integrated into the present schedule of Executive Staff meetings, area directors' meetings, and meetings of area program managers.

3. The Department should develop clear, realistic output objectives for all units within the DSS adoption services system. These output objectives should be regularly monitored and administrative action taken, when required, to identify and address barriers to the attainment of output objectives.

Implementation of the three recommendations presented above requires no new funding, no added adoption staff, and no organizational change in the Department of Social Services. These recommendations focus upon administrative actions which can be taken within the scope of the Department's current resources. Implementation of these recommendations, however, provides an essential foundation for other changes which are recommended later in this report.

Children Adopted Through DSS

Summary of Findings

* From FY81 through FY90, DSS and its contracted adoption agencies completed an average of 500 adoptions per year.

* In FY90 (the most recent year for which data is available), DSS completed the adoptions of 554 children.

* Ten percent of the adoptions completed from FY88 thru FY90 were of children adopted by relatives; 55% were of children adopted by unrelated foster parents; 31% of the adoptions in these three years were of children placed with recruited adoptive families.

* The number of adoptions of children by recruited adoptive families has been steadily declining.

* Of the adoptions completed from FY88 thru FY90, 69% were of white children. White children comprise 45% of the population of children currently waiting to be adopted.

* Of the total adoptions completed from FY88 thru FY90, 14% were of Black children. Black and biracial children comprise 41% of the group of children currently waiting to be adopted.

* The age distribution of children adopted from FY88 thru FY90 is the same as the age distribution of children currently waiting to be placed.

* White children are more likely than nonwhite children to be adopted by recruited adoptive families. Black and Hispanic children are more likely than white children to be adopted by relatives.

* Data is not regularly compiled regarding the number of sibling groups adopted nor of the number of children with special needs who are adopted each year.

The number of children adopted each year through the DSS adoption services system is significantly lower than the number of new adoption referrals generated within the Department. The DSS area offices and the Department's contracted adoption placement agencies have completed an average of 500 adoptions per year from FY81 thru FY90. During FY90 the DSS Legal Division received new case referrals involving 1021 children and during FY91, 1456 children were referred to the Legal Division. As the adoption system input is substantially larger than output, the number of children waiting to be adopted increases each year.

The profile of the children who are adopted each year through the DSS adoption services system does not match the profile of the children currently waiting to be adopted. A higher percentage of white children are adopted each year than the percentage of white children in the waiting population. The percentage of completed adoptions which are of Black and biracial children is significantly lower than the percentage of such children in the population awaiting adoption. The percentage of completed adoptions which are of Hispanic and other nonwhite children is essentially the same as the percentages of these children who are waiting to be adopted. If these disparities continue over time, the population of children waiting to be adopted will include a high percentage of Black and biracial children and a substantially lower percentage of white children.

Two thirds of the completed adoptions each year are of children who are adopted by relatives or unrelated foster parents. There has been a decrease in the number of adoptions by recruited adoptive families, from 191 such adoptions in FY88 to 158 adoptions by recruited families in FY90. During that three year period the number of adoptions by relatives and by unrelated foster parents increased. For many children in the adoption process, there may be fewer alternatives available. If there is not a relative or foster home immediately available, there also may not be a recruited adoptive family. In that case, the agency will have to initiate child-specific recruitment activities in order to identify a prospective pre-adoptive home for the child.

Examining the number of adoptions completed by DSS area offices indicates that the comparatively low adoption output exists throughout the service delivery system. The number of adoptions completed by seven DSS area offices in FY90 was less than 10% of the number of children awaiting adoption in those offices. Three area offices completed a number of adoptions in FY90 greater than 33% of the number of children in the adoption process in those offices. If all new adoption referrals were stopped (obviously impossible), at the current rate of output it would take five years or more for most DSS areas to complete the adoptions of those children who are already in the adoption process.

The previous section pointed out that two-thirds of the children currently awaiting adoption are in sibling groups and one-third are individual children. Data is not available, however, regarding what percentage of the 500 children adopted each year are in sibling groups which have been adopted. Of the population of children awaiting adoption, 24% are children with severe special needs. There is no data available indicating what percentage of the 500 adoptions are of these children. Does the population of children awaiting adoption consist of an increasing proportion of special needs children because fewer of these children are being adopted each year? That question cannot be answered with data currently available.

It must also be noted that FY90 is the most recent fiscal year for which complete adoption data is available. Data regarding the number of adoptions completed in FY91 will not be compiled until February, 1992, eight months after the end of the fiscal year. The Department's current consumer information system does not produce accurate data in a timely manner. Although the Department's current computer system has the capacity to generate relevant management data, the system has not been designed produce such data for adoption services.

Recommendations

1. DSS should immediately redesign its computerized adoption tracking system to produce accurate, reliable, and timely data. The redesign should include the development of new adoption social worker caseload summaries, adoption attorney workload summaries, and a series of reports which provide an accurate overview of the status of all children in the DSS adoption process. The new system should be completed and tested for full implementation at the beginning of FY93.

2. The adoption inventory has identified a total of 777 children currently placed in pre-adoptive homes who are legally free for adoption. The DSS Deputy Commissioner should take administrative action to ensure follow-up in these cases most of which can be legalized prior to the end of FY92.

3. The adoption inventory has identified a total of 1125 children currently placed in pre-adoptive homes who are not yet free for adoption. The DSS General Counsel, in consultation with area office directors and private contracted agencies, should develop a specific list of legal cases for priority action. Many of these children have already lived with their pre-adoptive families for six months or more and these children could be legalized as soon as parental rights have been terminated.

4. The adoption inventory identified a total of 218 children who are legally free but who are not yet placed in pre-adoptive homes. The newly-created DSS Central Office Permanency Planning Unit should initiate matching activities designed to identify prospective adoptive families for these children.

The recommendations presented above require no new funds, no additional staff, and no organizational changes within DSS. These recommendations are designed to use existing resources more efficiently and to prioritize the activities of existing staff. The recommended development of a new computerized adoption tracking system is intended to permit better coordination of the DSS adoption service system. Accurate and timely data is essential for effective management of the adoption services system.

THE NEED FOR ADOPTIVE FAMILIES

Summary of Findings

* The inventory of children in the DSS adoption process identified 1366 children who are not currently placed in pre-adoptive homes.

* A separate manual inventory of approved pre-adoptive families identified a total of 353 approved pre-adoptive families in the DSS adoption services system.

* Eighty-seven percent of these available pre-adoptive families are white, a total of 308 families. There were 22 Black families, 10 biracial families, 11 Hispanic families, and 2 other minority group families approved for the adoptive placement of children.

* Seventy-five percent of the prospective pre-adoptive families were seeking to adopt children under the age of six. The pool of 353 pre-adoptive families included 27 families willing to consider adopting a child age ten or older.

* Ninety-six of the approved families (52 white families and 44 minority families) stated they would consider placement of a minority child, 160 families would consider placement of a sibling group, and 116 families would consider adoption of a special needs child.

The lack of available pre-adoptive families who are seeking to adopt the types of children in the DSS adoption system is one of the three major barriers to the timely completion of adoptions. DSS has few pre-adoptive families available because the Department currently has no coordinated statewide program to recruit and train pre-adoptive families. DSS does participate in highly-visible, child-specific media recruitment activities in collaboration with the Massachuetts Adoption Resource Exchange, the Boston Globe, Boston Herald, WBZ-TV, and Channel 22-Springfield. But beyond these media recruitment activities, DSS does little to identify families interested in adoption in general.

Responsibility for recruitment and training of prospective adoption families is now assigned to the Family Resource social workers in the 26 DSS area offices. These DSS staff members attempt to meet several competing demands upon their time: recruitment and preparation of new foster families, re-evaluation of existing foster homes, initial homestudies for relatives and restricted child-specific foster homes, identification of foster homes for children in need of placement, ongoing training and supportive services for existing foster homes, as well as recruitment of potential adoptive families. The most pressing need in most DSS area offices is for more foster homes, particularly foster homes for adolescents and special needs children. Understandably, most area office family resource social workers devote most of their time to meeting these needs. Recruitment of prospective adoptive families usually is a relatively low priority in relation to other pressing daily needs of the area offices.

Two-thirds of the adoptions currently completed by DSS each year are of children who are adopted by relatives and children who are adopted by foster families with whom they have lived. At present, fifty to sixty children are adopted each year by relatives (10% of total adoptions) and 300-320 children are adopted by unrelated foster parents (55% of all adoptions). It is unlikely that the total number of such adoptions will increase substantially. In most cases, the availability of relatives as adoptive resources and the interest of foster parents in adopting children placed in their homes is established very early in the adoption process and such options are considered before other recruitment efforts are initiated. Given the fact that the availability of relatives as adoptive resources is limited and the number of foster parents interested in adoption is finite, DSS can only increase the number of adoptions completed by increasing the availability of recruited pre-adoptive families.

If DSS is to recruit and train pre-adoptive families who will adopt the types of children now in DSS custody, this task must assume much greater importance. It should be carried out by staff members who do nothing else. One of the barriers for families who are seeking to adopt children through DSS is that the required 10-week MAPP training program is offered only two or three times per year in most areas and at limited times. Prospective adoptive parents currently may wait months before they can enter the agency's pre-adoption training program. An aggressive adoption recruitment program would offer many more training opportunities to prospective pre-adoptive families in an attempt to bring these people into the DSS adoption system as quickly as possible.

It is important to point out that any new efforts to recruit more prospective adoptive families will not produce immediate results. When a family applies to adopt a child through DSS it will take two to three months to complete the pre-qualitication process (criminal check, child-abuse registry check, letters of reference, etc.), three to four months to complete the required pre-adoptive training program, two months or more to identify an appropriate child for placement, two months or more to prepare the child and family for placement, and then six months of supportive services to the new adoptive family before the adoption can by legalized in the Probate Court. There is, therefore, a minimum one year lag time between the initiation of recruitment activities and any measurable increase in completed adoptions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Department of Social Services should establish the goal of recruiting 700-800 new pre-adoptive families per year. DSS should design and implement a coordinated statewide recruitment program which is directed toward finding families who will adopt minority children, sibling groups, older children and children with special needs.

2. The Department should employ staff whose only job duties involve the recruitment, qualification, and training of pre-adoptive families. These staff should be organized into four supervisory units. Recruitment social workers should be dispersed to area offices throughout the state to permit ease of access for prospective pre-adoptive families and ease of communication with DSS adoption social workers. It is recommended that DSS employ four supervisors, 20 social workers, and 4 clerical staff members to comprise these adoptive family recruitment units.

   Each of the four recruitment units should sponsor two or three adoption information meetings per month. Each should begin at least one new MAPP group for pre-adoptive families per month. These activities would be in addition to MAPP training and other recruitment activities which are already offered by DSS area offices and the private contracted agencies.

NOTE: Implementation of this recommendation would add 28 staff members (4 supervisors, 20 social workers, and 4 clerks) to the DSS adoption services system at an annual cost of $760,800. An additional $40,000 should be allocated for printing of adoption brochures and recruitment materials, advertising and media costs, and other costs associated with recruitment activities.

3. The Department should develop a central, automated registry of all approved pre-adoptive families. This can be accomplished within the existing software and hardware capacity of DSS. The addition of one full-time clerical staff member to the Central Office Permanency Planning Unit would be required to maintain the registry and handle requests for information.

NOTE: Implementation of this recommendation would add one staff member at an annual cost of $22,100 to the DSS adoption services system.

4. The DSS Central Office Permanency Planning Unit should organize statewide activities designed to facilitate the matching of approved pre-adoptive families with children in need of adoptive placement. Every newly-approved pre-adoptive family should be considered a potential resource for every child in need of adoptive placement throughout the state.

   No additional staff or funding would be required for the implementation of this recommendation.

THE LEGAL PROCESSES REQUIRED TO COMPLETE ADOPTIONS

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

* Of the 3553 children waiting to be adopted in the fall of 1991, 1083 children (30%) were legally free through court action or voluntary adoption surrender, 1184 (33%) were the subjects of termination of parental rights cases pending in Probate Courts, and for 1007 children (28%) no legal action had yet been taken. The legal status of 279 waiting children was not specified in the adoption inventories.

* The number of adoption referrals to the DSS Legal Division's Adoption Placement Team (APT) has increased by 66% from 506 cases involving 678 children in FY87 to 838 cases involving 1456 children in FY91.

* In October, 1991 the 14 DSS APT Team attorneys had a total workload of 1360 adoption and guardianship cases, an average of 98 cases per attorney.

* In October, 1991 the APT team had 287 referred adoption cases which had not yet been conferenced for filing in the Probate Courts.

* Of the 1278 termination of parental rights cases currently filed by DSS in Probate Courts, 33% have been pending for 18 months or more.

The length of time required to free children to be adopted is the second major barrier to the timely completion of adoptions. In accordance with the provisions of Chapter 210 of the Massachusetts General Laws, the Department must file a legal action in Probate Court and prove by clear and convincing evidence that the parents are <u>currently</u> unfit to provide care for a child in order to terminate parental rights. When this court action is contested (75% of the DSS cases are contested), completion of the legal case to free the child for adoption may take months and even years.

Several proposals have been made in recent years to change the Massachusetts adoption laws and streamline Probate Court procedures. Although many of these proposals have merit, their enactment would have only marginal impact upon the length of time required to complete DSS adoption cases in the courts. The main reason that the adoption legal process take so long to complete is that DSS has too few attorneys available to handle its current adoption workload and very few support staff to assist these attorneys.

A child may be freed for adoption by voluntary surrenders obtained from both biological parents or by court action to terminate parental rights. Seven percent of the waiting children have been freed by surrenders. Since some of these surrenders were obtained after the filing of a court case, it is likely that DSS attorneys will be involved in 95% of all the Department's adoption cases.

The number of adoption cases referred for legal action has increased by 66% in four years from 506 case referrals in FY87 to 838 case referrals in FY91. The number of children involved in these cases has more than doubled from 678 referred children in FY87 to 1456 referred children in FY91. During these four years the number of attorneys assigned to adoption legal functions did not increase. During 1990 and 1991 some of these attorneys' time was diverted to handling care and protection petitions because a hiring freeze did not allow filling other vacant legal positions in the Department.

The APT team completed 472 adoption legal cases in FY90 (89% were allowed, freeing 684 children) and 427 cases in FY91 (91% allowed freeing 638 children). The reduction in the APT Team output from FY90 to FY91 was due mainly to the diversion of adoption attorneys to other legal tasks.

Termination of parental rights cases are "paper intensive" endeavors. DSS is required by law to provide full copies of the case record to the parents' attorney(s), the attorney(s) appointed to represent the children, and often to other parties appointed by the court. Because of the lack of clerical staff, DSS adoption attorneys now spend countless hours redacting and Xeroxing case records. Needless to say, those tasks could be performed as

easily by clerical staff or a paralegal under the supervision of an attorney, freeing the attorney for other legal tasks.

After parental rights have been terminated, when a child has lived with the pre-adoptive family for a minimum of six months, the Department must return to Probate Court to file the necessary documents to finalize the adoption. Suffolk County Probate Court requires an attorney to file the final adoption documents; other Probate Courts permit the finalization of adoptions to be processed by DSS social workers. Interviews with experienced DSS adoption workers and attorneys indicate that approximately 17 man-hours are required to complete the legal paperwork necessary to finalize an adoption. This, too, is work that could be performed by a paralegal under supervision.

If DSS is to increase the output of the adoption services system, the Department's Legal Division must have sufficient staff to complete Chapter 210 cases in a reasonable length of time. The Legal staff must be able to keep pace with the current volume of new referrals and begin to reduce the backlog of cases which are pending in the Probate Courts. The APT Team should be staffed at a level which will permit the completion of 700-800 cases per year.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. DSS should add ten attorneys to the APT Team to be deployed in accordance with the current workload distribution.

2. DSS should employ a trained paralegal in each of the four APT units to handle paperwork involved in the filing of Chapter 210 cases and to prepare legal documents required to finalize adoptions.

3. DSS should assign five additional secretaries to the Legal Division, one to each APT Team unit and one to the Central Legal Office.

4. The DSS General Counsel should receive a budget allocation of $80,000 to permit the employment of private legal counsel for adoption cases in which the Department may have a potential conflict of interest (adoptions by DSS staff

members, for example) and to permit assignment of adoption and/or guardianship cases to private attorneys to alleviate backlogs in the Department's adoption legal workload.

NOTE: Implementation of these four recommendations would add 19 positions (10 attorneys, 4 paralegals, and 5 clerical staff) to the DSS adoption services system at an annualized cost of $692,100.

DSS Adoption Practice and Procedures

Summary of Findings

* The twenty-six DSS area offices carried a combined total of 1764 adoption cases during the fall of 1991 (1029 individual children and 735 sibling groups in the adoption process). Of that total, 890 cases (50%) were assigned to designated adoption social workers.

* Half of the DSS adoption cases are in the caseloads of ongoing social workers most of whom have no training and little experience in adoption practice.

* There are many differences in area office practices for the preparation of adoption plans, study and selection of pre-adoption homes, preparation of the child and pre-adoptive family for placement, and post-placement services to new adoptive families.

* The Department does not have a uniform definition of an adoption case nor a standard procedure for assigning adoption cases. Some area offices assign only the children to be adopted to adoption workers while the ongoing social workers continue to provide services to biological parents and other family members. Other area offices assign all family members - parents and children - to adoption social workers.

* DSS has no specific job descriptions for adoption social workers and no workload standards for full-time adoption workers.

Adoption social work is a specialized function which requires formalized training, specific knowledge, skills, supervision and experience. An adoption worker must be able to conduct a thorough pre-adoption assessment of a child in order to identify potential genetic or organic factors which may produce emotional or behavioral problems later in the child's life. The adoption worker must be able to assess the impact of losses, stress and trauma which the child has experienced. The adoption worker must know how to identify the child's strengths and weaknesses and the child's capacity to attach to a new family. This knowledge is essential in order to identify the type of adoptive family which might best meet the child's needs both now and in the future.

The adoption worker must be skillful in preparing the child for placement---helping the child come to terms with the past and at the same time adjust to a new family setting. With older children an adoption worker will often prepare a "life book" to help the child preserve his history and take those positive memories of earlier times with him into a new family. The adoption worker must be able to prepare the pre-adoptive family for placement of a child or sibling group and help these new parents maintain realistic expectations of the child whom they are adopting. When the placement is a "legal risk" placement (the children are placed in the pre-adoptive home before parental rights have been terminated), the adoption worker must be able to support both the child and the prospective adoptive parents through the stressful and long court process.

Good adoption practice is both a science and an art. Some of the necessary skill and knowledge can be acquired through training. Other skills are acquired only through experience. There is no cookbook recipe to guide the adoption worker in making an appropriate match between a waiting child and a waiting pre-adoptive family. Written procedures are inadequate in guiding the adoption worker through the process of preparing both the child and the potential adoptive parents for placement. The issues of AIDS, cocaine addiction, severe deprivation, and sexual abuse make it imperative that the agency's adoption workers not only know how to recognize the potential future hazards associated with these conditions, but also how to accurately and sensitively communicate these risks to potential adoptive families. If the adoption social worker does not fully and openly communicate with the adoptive family, the outcome may not only be emotionally damaging to the adopted child and adoptive parents but the Commonwealth may also be exposed to legal liability. There are an increasing number of lawsuits against adoption agencies being filed throughout the United States by adoptive parents alleging that they had not been fully informed of their adopted child's background and of potential problems which might develop later in the adopted child's life.

The quality of adoption services provided by DSS social workers is, at best, uneven. DSS has 30-40 adoption social workers and supervisors with eight or more years of experience, many of whom have obtained advanced training in adoption casework. At the same time, adoption cases are assigned to many DSS social workers who have no formal training in adoption practice and little adoption experience. As the DSS backlog of

adoption cases has grown, new adoption cases often remain in the caseloads of ongoing social workers because there is no room in the caseloads of designated adoption workers. It should not be surprising that these cases receive low priority given the crises inherent in the protective and adolescent cases which comprise the majority of the ongoing social workers' caseloads.

If DSS is to reduce the time required for the completion of adoptions and improve the operation of its adoption services system, two major issues must be addressed and resolved:

Mixed Caseloads: Although all 26 DSS area offices have one or more adoption social workers, in most of the areas adoption cases are also assigned to ongoing social workers. Only four DSS area offices have assigned all adoption cases to designated adoption social workers. As the backlog of adoption cases has grown, most areas have responded not by designating additional adoption workers but by delaying the assignment of cases to the adoption workers. In some area offices, adoption cases are not assigned to adoption workers until the children are legally free for adoption. In those areas, the tasks of freeing the child and seeking an adoptive home for the child are pursued sequentially rather than concurrently introducing delays in the adoption process.

In October, 1991 the DSS Staffing Analysis Unit listed 80 social workers (57 FTE's) in DSS area offices with assigned adoption cases. Forty-one full-time social workers and 22 part-time social workers in area offices had caseloads consisting only of adoption cases. These 80 DSS staff members were listed as carrying a total of 890 adoption cases. Seventeen area office social workers carried adoption cases in addition to other job duties such as foster family recruitment and training. The adoption inventory conducted during the fall of 1991 revealed a total DSS adoption workload of 1764 cases including 3020 children. Almost half of the current DSS adoption cases therefore are carried by ongoing social workers rather than designated adoption social workers.

Case Definition: When adoption is established as the service plan goal for a child or sibling group, DSS is legally obligated to continue providing services and visitation rights to the children's biological parents. In order to terminate parental rights, DSS must demonstrate to the court that it has made every possible effort to remedy the situation which led to the original placement of the children. DSS cannot discontinue services to the biological parents and DSS cannot withhold parental visitation with the children until the Chapter 210 legal case is concluded. In every adoption case except those in which voluntary surrenders are immediately obtained, DSS assumes a dual role. On the one hand, DSS must continue ongoing services to the parent(s) and attempt to reunify the family. On the other hand, DSS must seek an adoptive family for the child(ren) and prepare the child(ren) for placement in a new family setting. These two tasks are inherently contradictory.

Sixteen of the DSS area offices deal with these conflicting obligations by using a "dual assignment" system. When the adoption process begins, the ongoing social worker retains responsibility for services to the biological parents while an adoption worker assumes responsibility for services to the children who are to be adopted. Each of the two social workers assigned to the case has separate responsibilities: the ongoing worker to work with the parents and, if possible, reunify the family; the adoption worker to begin the process of seeking an adoptive home for the children. If challenged in court, the Department can successfully argue that it is conscientiously providing services to the biological parents because the same social worker is not simultaneously seeking an adoptive home in which to place their children.

In ten area offices, adoption cases are not dually-assigned. The adoption social worker is assigned both the biological parents and the children to be adopted. The adoption worker must continue providing reunification services to the parents while seeking to place the children in an adoptive home. These are contradictory service objectives. Those offices which do not assign cases to adoption workers until the children are legally free avoid this inherent contradiction of goals, but keep the children in limbo by not seeking adoptive placements for children until their court cases are concluded.

The DSS Central Office must develop and promulgate a uniform agency policy for the definition and assignment

of adoption cases.

Other important issues of practice and procedures are dependent upon the resolution of these two major policy issues. For example, DSS cannot establish minimum standards of training for adoption social workers if half of the Department's adoption cases are to remain the responsibility of ongoing social workers. The Department would develop one type of job description for adoption social workers if they are expected to provide services to biological parents as well as children to be adopted and a very different job description if the adoption social worker is responsible only for provision of services to the children to be adopted. These and other important issues of practice can only be addressed after DSS has clarified its policies regarding the assignment of adoption cases.

Recommendations

1. DSS should assign all adoption cases to designated adoption social workers. Having adoption cases carried by social workers who regularly perform the varied tasks required to complete adoptions is more efficient in the use of social workers' time and more cost-effective. The quality of service provided by designated adoption workers will be superior to the quality of service provided by ongoing social workers who are less familiar with adoption practice and procedures.

   The implementation of this recommendation requires no new funding but would require the assignment of additional personnel to the adoption services system from the current complement of ongoing social workers in each of the DSS area offices. The 26 area offices currently carry a combined total of 1764 adoption cases, 890 of which are assigned to 57 FTE adoption social workers. At a caseload ration of 18:1 the Department currently needs 98 designated adoption social workers. To implement this recommendation, DSS area offices would be required to change the job functions of a limited number of social workers and aggregate the current adoption cases in these newly-designated adoption workers' caseloads. The implementation of this recommendation in no way increases the Department's total caseload nor the total number of social workers required to carry that caseload.

2. DSS should establish minimum training standards for all adoption social workers. The DSS Training Unit has developed a Permanency Planning Certificate

curriculum which consists of a series of seminars presenting the basic skills and knowledge required for adoption practice. Thirty-seven DSS social workers have already registered to participate in this certificate program. The DSS Training Unit could offer these training programs more frequently at convenient locations throughout the state to permit new adoption social workers to meet the Department's minimum training standards. The DSS Training Unit should also develop advanced adoption practice seminars and other programs designed to discuss the many complex clinical and ethical issues associated with adoption practice in the 1990's.

The implementation of this recommendation would cost $15,000 in the first year, $10,000 in the second year, and $5000 per year thereafter primarily for the fees of trainers and seminar leaders who are not DSS staff members and for educational materials. No cost is associated with the presentation of training sessions which are held in DSS offices, state colleges, and other state facilities.

3. DSS should establish a dual-assignment system for all adoption cases. The use of separate social workers to provide services to biological parents and to children in adoption cases has several advantages over the assignment of the entire family to a single social worker.

First, a dual-assignment system provides better services to the biological parents. If, after establishment of the adoption goal for the children, the biological parents do make positive changes, the Department should withdraw its adoption legal case and work to reunify the children with their biological parents. This is more likely to occur if the ongoing social worker continues to work with the biological parents rather than if the same social worker has also invested time and energy in identifying a pre-adoptive family for the child and in preparing the child for placement with this family.

Secondly, a dual-assignment system avoids an ethical conflict and strengthens the Department's legal case for termination of parental rights.

Third, a dual-assignment system uses the adoption social worker's time more efficiently because the ongoing social worker supervises the parents' visitation with their children and provides other services to the parents, freeing the adoption social worker to concentrate upon effecting the adoptive placement of the children.

The implementation of a dual-assignment system for adoption cases would require additional funding for social work staff. If the Department has designated additional adoption social workers from among the existing complement of ongoing social workers, then additional ongoing social workers would be required to carry the bio-parent cases of children who are assigned to adoption social workers. It must be emphasized that when parental rights have been terminated by court action, the ongoing case may be closed unless there are other children remaining with the biological parents who are in need of continuing services. When the parents' ongoing case is closed, there is no longer a dual-assignment of the adoption case.

As previously noted, DSS area offices currently carry a combined total of 1764 adoption cases which require 98 full-time adoption workers. In 30% of these cases parental rights have already been terminated by court action or adoption surrender. Sixty-nine more ongoing social workers would therefore be required to provide services to parents in the 1235 cases in which parental rights have not been terminated. Of that total, however, 490 cases are already assigned to both adoption workers and ongoing social workers in area offices which utilize the dual-assignment system. If the Department were to immediately implement a dual-assignment system for all adoption cases, 42 more ongoing social workers would be needed to provide services to biological parents in the 745 adoption cases which are currently in mixed caseloads or assigned to adoption workers in area offices which do not currently utilize a dual-assignment system for adoption cases.

Less than 42 more ongoing social workers would be required if DSS develops a transitional process to implement a dual-assignment system for adoption cases. The Department could avoid large number of case transfers by assigning only the children to designated adoption workers in newly-referred adoption cases and continuing the present assignment of all other adoption cases.

4. The DSS Deputy Commissioner for Field Operations and the Assistant Commissioner for Human Resources, in collaboration with the 26 Area Directors, should

develop a transitional plan which would provide for the assignment of all adoption cases to designated adoption workers utilizing a dual-assignment system. This plan should provide a transitional process which will avoid large number of case transfers and the consequent disruption of adoption services which are already in process.

NOTE:

The immediate statewide implementation of a dual-assignment system would add 42 more social worker positions and eight supervisory positions to the DSS staffing pattern at an annual cost of $1,397,600. A transitional process to implement dual-assignment of adoption cases, if planned in coordination with revised staff reduction targets for the Department, would significantly reduce the requirements for additional DSS social workers and would cost much less.

ADOPTION SERVICES PROVIDED BY CONTRACTED AGENCIES

Summary of Findings

* Fifteen percent of all children in the DSS adoption services system are served by private social service agencies who provide adoption services under contract with DSS.

* Of the 3553 children in DSS custody waiting to be adopted, 533 were in the caseloads of contracted adoption placement agencies.

* Of these 533 children:
  - 172 (32%) were placed in pre-adoptive homes and were legally free;
  - 77 (14%) were legally free, but not yet placed in pre-adoptive homes;
  - 123 (23%) were placed in pre-adoptive homes but were not legally free to be adopted;
  - 41 (8%) were not placed and not free;
  - Information on both placement and legal status was not provided for 120 (23%) of the children.

* With the exception of the 85 special needs children served by Project IMPACT, the profile of the children served by private agencies matches the profile of children in the DSS area office adoption caseloads.

* Contracted adoption agencies reported almost twenty-five percent of the approved pre-adoptive families recorded by the inventory. Contracted agencies also reported a higher proportion of minority pre-adoptive families than did DSS area offices.

Private social service agencies have been an integral part of the DSS adoption services system for more than twenty years. Among the earliest purchase of service contracts by DSS's predecessor agencies, the Division of Child Guardianship and Department of Public Welfare, were contracts for services to unwed mothers and pregnant adolescents. These contracts offered counseling services and assisted those women who decided to surrender their children after birth. For some agencies, these contracts were a significant source of healthy newborns and infants to be placed for adoption.

In the mid-1970's, attention in adoption practice began to focus upon those children who were "hard to place," children who often remained in the adoption system for years. Project IMPACT

(Innovative Matching of Parents And Children Together) began in 1976 as a collaborative endeavor between the Department of Public Welfare and a consortium of private agencies to focus upon those children who might be considered unadoptable. In 1984, IMPACT developed a specialized program, the Collaboration for Families, which focuses upon the adoption of developmentally disabled, multiply-handicapped, and medically-involved children.

In the late 1970's, DPW and then DSS expanded its network of adoption placement contracts to include private social service agencies in every section of the Commonwealth. DSS now has contracts with fourteen adoption placement agencies including several who have strong relationships with the African-American and Hispanic communities.

DSS has two contracts for adoption services which do not involve placement services:

> The Pre- and Post-Adoption Consulting Team (PACT) provides consultation to DSS social workers and direct consultation with families who are experiencing difficulties in the adoption process. This agency also assists adoptive families who are experiencing difficulties after the adoption has been legalized.
>
> MARE, the Massachusetts Adoption Resource Exchange, sponsors a variety of activities designed to facilitate the matching of prospective adoptive families with children in need of placement. MARE maintains and disseminates a manual of waiting children and families, sponsors adoption parties, holds exchange meetings for adoption agencies, and coordinates child-specific media recruitment through the Boston Globe, WBZ-TV, and Channel 22-Springfield. MARE also sponsors the One Church One Child coalitation which seeks African-American families to adopt the many waiting biracial and African-American children.

The fourteen DSS adoption placement contracts are based upon the "partnership agency services (PAS)" model which was introduced by DSS in FY88. Under this model adoption agencies assume full case management responsibility for all families and are expected to provide services to biological parents, siblings, as well as to the children who are to be adopted. PAS agencies are reimbursed for maintaining a caseload of between 15-20 families: the equivalent of a DSS social worker's caseload.

The application of the PAS model for adoption placement services presents several difficulties. The first issues involves having the adoption agencies provide services to biological parents as well as to the children to be adopted. The advantages of a dual-assignment system for adoption cases, cited in the previous section in regard to DSS social workers, apply also to the adoption agencies. The expertise of these agencies is in their ability to recruit and train prospective adoptive parents, to assess the needs of children awaiting adoption, to prepare the child and family for placement and to provide supportive services after placement. To ask these agencies also to provide protective services to bio-parents, or intensive family services if there are other children remaining in the home, does not use the expertise of these agencies to best advantage.

A second shortcoming of the PAS model for adoption placement contracts is that the agencies are reimbursed for carrying cases, not for completing the adoption process. To receive full payment each month the adoption agency must maintain a caseload of 15-20 active cases per FTE. If new referrals are delayed or there are not referrals immediately available, it would not be unusual for the agency to delay closing cases in order not to jeopardize cash flow. The PAS model which reimburses agencies based upon current caseload provides no financial incentive to complete adoptions and to close cases.

A third shortcoming of the PAS model is that it does not permit any type of service other than a full case management case. DSS often needs discrete services to be performed by independent adoption agencies: homestudies for DSS staff members entering the adoption process; an adoption assessment of a child to provide a second opinion in planning for that child; a foster family or relative adoption assessment in situations in which the DSS social worker may feel unable to render objective judgements. These and several other discrete services cannot now be easily performed by the adoption agencies because they do not fit into the PAS case management model.

The network of private adoption agencies who contract with DSS are an invaluable resource. The structure of the current contract, however, does not allow the Department to use the expertise of the private agencies to best advantage.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. DSS should refer only children to be adopted to the private contracted adoption ages. Responsibility for services to the biological parents and other family members should be retained by the DSS ongoing social worker until parental rights have been terminated.

Currently DSS makes approximately 140-150 new adoption referrals to private agencies each year, 12-13 referrals per month. Spread out over 26 different area offices which originate these referrals, the impact of this recommendation would have a negligible effect upon the ongoing caseloads of the area offices.

2. DSS should develop and implement in FY93 a performance-based contract system for adoption placement services. A performance-based contracting system would reimburse agencies for completing those outputs which lead to the desired outcome of a completed adoption. For example, the agency would receive an initial referral payment, a second payment upon completion of the pre-adoption assessment of the child, a third payment upon the identification of a pre-adoptive home, a fourth payment upon placement in the home, a fifth payment upon legalization of the adoption, and a final payment within 60 days after legalization. This type of system provides direct incentives to keep cases moving smoothly toward the desired outcome of adoption.

   The new contracting system should also encompass a fee structure for direct services to make it possible for DSS to utilize private agencies for homestudies of staff,foster family or relative adoption assessments, and second-opinion assessments of children in the DSS adoption caseloads.

   Implementation of this recommendation would require no additional funds. The total allocated for these contracts would remain the same as the amount allocated for PAS services at the present time.

SUBSIDIZED ADOPTIONS

Summary of Findings

* As of 12/31/91, DSS had 3645 active adoption subsidy cases. That total included:

  - 1551 children (43%) with serious disabilities: 844 children with emotional handicaps, 585 children with physical handicaps, and 122 children with mental disabilities;

  - 1023 children (28%) who were adopted as members of sibling groups;

  - 619 children (17%) who were adopted by foster parents with whom they had bonded;

  - 452 children (12%) who are minority children or children over age 12 at the time of their adoption.

* Eighty-two percent of all DSS adoptions completed from FY88 thru FY90 were approved to receive adoption subsidy.

* Of the total 3645 subsidized adoptions, 10% receive Medicaid only and 90% receive a cash subsidy. Eighty-three percent of all approved adoption subsidies receive a full cash subsidy and 7% receive partial cash subsidy. There are two approved subsidy cases which receive no cash subsidy and no current Medicaid.

* The average DSS expenditure for adoption subsidy is $5300 per child per year.

Adoption subsidy began in Massachusetts in the 1970's as a program to remove the financial barriers that made it difficult for many types of children to be adopted. Federal guidelines for subsidy were included in PL96-272, the Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act of 1980. Under the provisions of that act, DSS receives Federal financial reimbursement for subsidized adoptions of children who have come from AFDC-eligible homes. Eligibility for adoption subsidy is based upon the special needs of the child which make it difficult to place the child for adoption: a physical or mental handicap, children in sibling groups, children over the age of twelve, or minority children for whom there are few adoptive family resources. The subsidy must be approved prior to the adoption. Once approved the subsidy may remain in effect until the adopted child is age 18

or after the child's 18th birthday if the child is attending a full-time educational program with financial support from the parents.

The issues associated with AIDs and fetal cocaine addiction have introduced a new dimension into the approval of adoption subsidies. At the time of adoption these children may be asymptomatic, but may later develop serious problems. The two DSS approved subsidies with no payment or Medicaid at present are cases of this type in which the Department is preserving the right of subsidy should the two at-risk infants develop serious illnesses later in childhood. Legislation has been introduced in Congress which would permit the approval of ex poste facto subsidies in cases such as these.

DSS social workers and foster parents are all very familiar with the operation of the Department's adoption subsidy program. Almost all of the adoptions of children by unrelated foster parents and a high proportion of adoption by relatives are subsidized. In most of these cases, the relatives and/or foster parents cared for the children through the DSS foster care system before adoption was established as the child's goal. A smaller percentage of the adoptions by recruited adoptive parents are subsidized with the exception of those families who adopt seriously medically impaired children who need subsidy both for the Medicaid coverage and for cash to meet other medical expenses. If DSS recruits more adoptive families with whom to place children, the number of subsidized adoptions as a percentage of total adoptions should begin to decrease.

The number of subsidized guardianships and adoptions has grown from a total of 1160 children in June, 1981, to more than 4500 children at the end of December, 1991. DSS expenditures for subsidy have increased from $2.5 million in FY81 to more than $23 million in FY92. Although this total seems quite large, it is considerable less than the former costs of maintaining these children in residential or foster care. And, most important, each of these children knows that he or she has a permanent home throughout childhood.

FISCAL CONSIDERATIONS

Increased output of the DSS adoption services system will produce, over time, two different dividends. Most important are the human dividends of inestimable value in the lives of those children who are adopted. In addition to that primary goal, fiscal dividends will be realized in two forms: savings in DSS direct expenditures as children leave DSS-funded placements to enter adoptive homes, and reductions in the DSS social worker staffing needs resulting from increased case closings.

In a dynamic economic environment even the most skilled investment advisor cannot project the exact value of returns on most types of investments. In like manner, in the dynamic social environment of DSS, it is not possible to project the exact value of potential savings which will result from the investment of additional state and Federal funds in adoption services. At best, one can identify the types of potential returns on investment and project a range of anticipated savings.

The potential value of the savings which may be realized by increasing the output of the DSS adoption services system should be measured against the Department's current expenditures for children waiting to be adopted. At an average cost of $10,300 per child per year, DSS now spends more than $36.5 million per year for services to children in the adoption process. When a child leaves a DSS-funded placement to enter an unsubsidized adoptive home, DSS saves $10,000 per year in placement costs. When a subsidized adoption is completed DSS saves an average of $5000 per child ($10,300 prior cost minus $5,300 average subsidy amount). The adoption of a sibling group reduces DSS spending for each of the siblings. Although more difficult to effect, the adoption of sibling groups generate greater savings than the adoption of individual children.

It should also be noted that the savings generated by completed adoptions represent continuing cumulative reductions in DSS expenditures, not one-time spending reductions. If, for example, a child is adopted in FY92, savings can be calculated for that fiscal year. Had the child not been adopted, however, he or she would have remained in DSS custody and DSS would have been required to provide continuing placement services. The potential cumulative value of savings generated by completed adoptions is discussed later in this section.

Direct Expenditures and Potential Savings.

TYPE OF INVESTMENT: Full-time social workers assigned to recruit and train pre-adoptive families.

DESIRED OUTPUT: More available pre-adoptive homes leading to faster placements of children producing more completed adoptions.

TYPE OF RETURN: Reductions in DSS direct expenditures resulting from children leaving DSS-funded placements to enter adoptive homes.

RECOMMENDED INVESTMENT: Assign 4 supervisors, 20 social workers, and 5 clerical staff to recruitment/matching functions; allocate $40,000 for printing recruitment materials; media costs and other recruitment costs. Projected annual cost: $822,900.

OUTPUT REQUIRED TO COVER COST: An increase of 80 completed unsubsidized adoptions per year.

NOTE: Recruitment social workers do not themselves complete adoptions and close adoption cases. Their activities, however, contribute to the faster completion of adoptions by making more alternative homes available for children, facilitating the matching of waiting children with prospective pre-adoptive homes, and often by assisting the adoption placement worker in preparing the pre-adoptive family for placement of a child. If these activities of each of the 20 recommended new adoption recruitment social workers leads to the adoption of four more children per year, the savings generated will equal the cost of employing the full complement of recruitment staff which are recommended in this report.

TYPE OF INVESTMENT: Assign additional attorneys and support staff to the DSS Legal Division to handle the adoption workload.

DESIRED OUTPUT: Faster filing of newly-referred adoption legal cases; faster completion of pending cases filed in Probate Courts; faster completion of Probate Court adoption legalization process.

TYPE OF RETURN: Completion of termination of parental rights cases which permits the closing of bio-parent cases; completion of cases freeing children for adoption; faster process to free children. leads to more completed adoptions.

RECOMMENDED INVESTMENT:	10 added attorneys, 4 paralegals, and 5 clerical staff; allocation of $80,000 to permit assignment of private counsel to adoption cases. Projected annual cost: $692,100.
OUTPUT REQUIRED TO COVER COST:	An increase of 70 completed unsubsidized adoptions per year.

NOTE: Any increase in the number of adoptions completed by DSS each year which includes 150 more unsubsidized adoptions will generate savings in DSS direct expenditures equal to or greater than the cost of assigning full-time adoption recruitment staff and adding legal staff to the DSS adoption services system. Increases in the annual number of completed adoptions above that level begin to generate net savings in DSS direct expenditures.

Allocation of Staff to Adoption Functions/ Increased Case Closings due to Completed Adoptions.

This report has recommended changes in the allocation of DSS social workers: retention of bio-parent cases by ongoing social workers and the designation of more adoption placement social workers. It is easier to discuss such changes in terms of caseload measures (new referrals in relation to case closings) rather than in terms of dollar expenditures.

Currently DSS generates 850 new adoption cases per year which involve 1450 children and closes 300 adoption cases per year by completing the adoption of 550 children. The Department has 2100 adoption cases including 3550 children who are now in the adoption process. The **current need** for case-carrying social workers assigned to the adoption system is a function of the current rate of referral in relation to case closing rate, taking into account the number of cases already in process. The **future need** for adoption social workers will begin to decrease when the number of adoption cases closed exceeds the number of new adoption referrals, and when the number of children in the adoption process has been decreased to an acceptable level.

Faster completion of the adoption process resulting in more completed adoptions will reduce the future need for adoption social workers, but this may or may not reduce the overall staffing level of DSS. The Department's overall social worker staffing level is determined by many services other than adoption: volume of protective service reports, other intake volume, average length of services to families, numbers of children in placement, etc. Given the fact that almost 30% of all children in DSS placements are waiting to be adopted, faster completion of these adoptions would be a significant contributing factor to the Department's ability to decrease social worker staffing requirements in the future.

Staff Allocation: All adoption cases to be assigned to designated adoption social workers.

NOTE: Implementation of this recommendation requires changing the job duties of a limited number of existing DSS ongoing social workers to adoption functions and transferring existing adoption cases to these newly-designated adoption social workers. No new staff or funding is required for implementation.

Staff Allocation: DSS retention of responsibility for services to biological parents in cases which are referred to contracted private agencies for adoption placement of the children.

Case Volume: 140-150 case referrals to contracted agencies per year.

Staff Required: 8 FTE social workers to carry 140-150 bio-parent cases.

Case Closings Required to Cover Staff Allocation: A combination of 140-150 additional bio-parent cases and/or adoption placement cases closed per year.

NOTE: The completion of a court action to terminate parental rights permits the ongoing social worker to close the biological parents' case unless there are other children in need of DSS services who remain in the parents' care. If DSS attorneys complete 150 more Chapter 210 cases per year, 150 bio-parent cases per year can be closed. If such an increase is achieved, DSS needs no additional social worker staff to implement this recommendation.

Staff Allocation: Implementation of a statewide dual-assignment system for all adoption cases.

Case Volume: A total of 42 FTE social workers and 8 supervisors would be required for immediate statewide dual-assignment of all DSS adoption cases. A practical transition plan would implement dual-assignment of only new adoption cases as such referrals are made. There are currently 75 new adoption referrals per month involving 120-125 children.

Staff Required: Revised staffing levels equal to five more FTE ongoing social workers per month. This added staff is sufficient to permit ongoing workers to retain 90 new bio-parent cases per month.

Case Closings Required to Cover Allocation	The addition of 25 more FTE social workers assigned either to ongoing or adoption cases over a five month period would be sufficient to permit statewide implementation of a dual-assignment system for all adoption cases. That number, coupled with more case closings generated by completion of legal cases and more completed adoptions which also generate case closings, would not have to be increased further to maintain the dual-assignment system.

NOTE: The transition to a statewide dual-assignment system for all adoption cases would require careful management and coordination during the first year of implementation to avoid wholesale case transfers and disruption of services already underway. By the end of the first implementation year, however, the number of adoption cases closed each month should equal or exceed the number of new adoption referrals each month. At that point in time, the output volume of the adoption system would begin to reduce the size of the adoption backlog. DSS would then begin to realize significant expenditure reductions as the number of children in DSS-funded placements who are waiting to be adopted begins to decrease rapidly.

A graphic analysis is presented on the following page which illustrates the manner in which DSS expenditure savings can accrue as a result of increasing the number of adoptions completed each year. This analysis utilizes the following assumptions:

* Any increase in the number of adoptions completed each year above the current average of 500 adoptions per year generates some savings in expenditures.

* The annualized values of savings are $10,000 per child for an unsubsidized adoption and $5000 per child for a subsidized adoption.

* The value of savings in the year in which the adoption is completed is calculated at 50% of the annualized value because the adoption is not in effect for the full twelve months.

* The current level of 80% subsidized adoptions will begin to decrease as more placements are made into recruited pre-adoptive homes which are less likely to be subsidized than adoptions by foster parents and relatives.

* In the analysis an increase to 700 adoptions completed in FY92 is projected based upon the assumption that this report's recommendations regarding the establishment of output objectives will be implemented.

* An increase to 1000 completed adoptions in FY93 is projected based upon the assumption that the DSS legal staff will be increased in early FY93 and that this increased staff will concentrate upon completing the cases of children who are already placed in pre-adoptive homes.

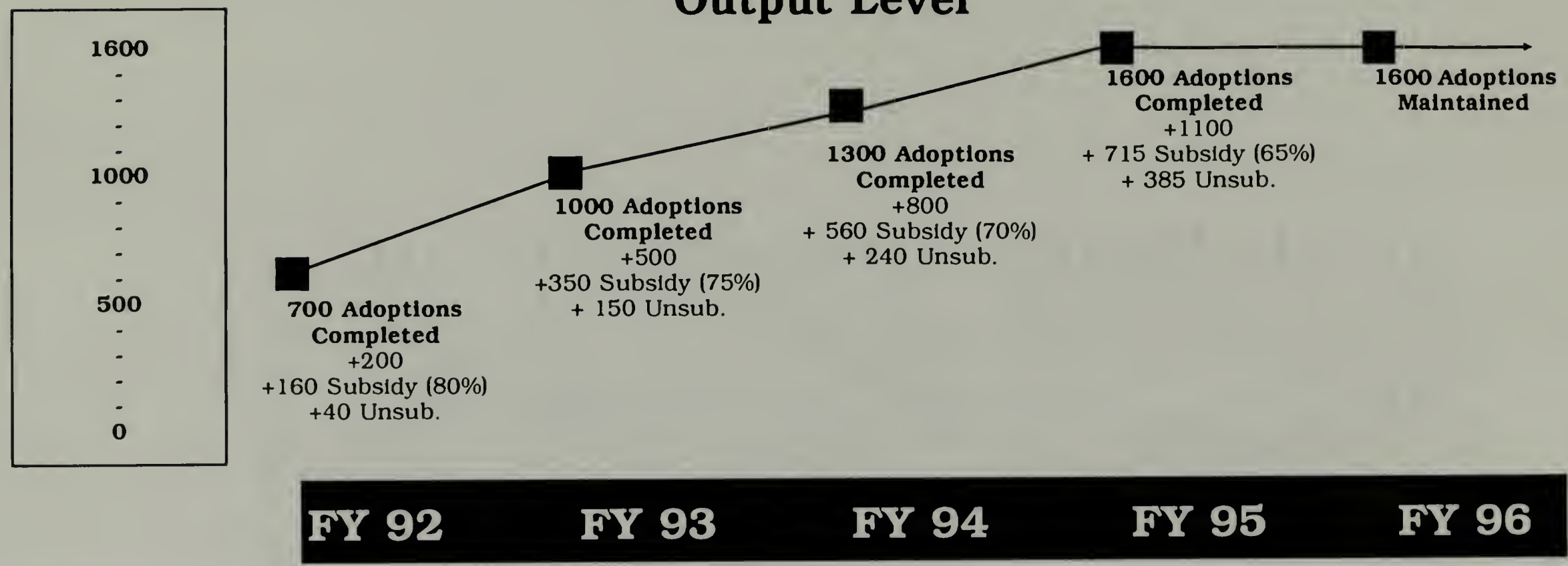
* Projected increases to 1300 adoptions in FY94 and 1600 adoptions in FY95 are based upon the assumption of an intensive recruitment campaign beginning in FY93 and the employment of full-time recruitment staff who will identify 700-800 new prospective pre-adoptive parents per year.

Are these projections realistic? The inventory of children in the DSS adoption process has identified 777 children who are legally free to be adopted and who are placed in pre-adoptive homes. Legalization of those adoptions would meet the projected completion of 700 adoptions in FY92. The inventory also identified 1125 children placed in pre-adoptive homes who are not yet legally free to be adopted. If new and existing DSS legal staff prioritize the completion of these court cases, the Department should be able to achieve the 1000 adoptions projected for FY93.

The analysis shown on the following page clearly illustrates that the completion of 700 adoptions in FY92 and 1000 adoptions in FY93 will generate $2.8 million in FY93 expenditure savings. That amount exceeds the $2.4 million which would be required to implement all of the recommendations in this report. If the increased staff then generates additional adoptions as illustrated in the analysis, the Department accrues substantial cumulative savings in expenditures for placement services in FY94 thru FY96.

The projections presented in this analysis represent realistic and attainable outputs from the DSS adoption services system. Outputs of this magnitude will only be realized, however, if the Department invests additional staff and funds in the adoption system. If that investment is not made, output will continue in the range of 500-800 adoptions per year. And with inputs continuing at the level of 1300-1500 children per year, the number of children waiting to be adopted will continue to grow.

Output Level



FY 92 Adoptions	600,000	1,200,000	1,200,000	1,200,000	1,200,000
FY 93 Adoptions		1,625,000	3,250,000	3,250,000	3,250,000
FY 94 Adoptions			2,600,000	5,200,000	5,200,000
FY 95 Adoptions				3,712,500	7,425,000
FY 96 Adoptions					3,712,500
Annual Savings	$600,000	$2,825,000	$7,050,000	$13,362,500	$20,787,500
Cumulative Savings	$600,000	$3,425,000	$10,475,000	$23,837,500	$44,625,000

Savings Generated by Completed Adoptions

A Proposed Action Plan

It is important that DSS act quickly to implement changes in the adoption services system and introduce new resources into that system. The current output of the system (completed adoptions) is significantly lower than the current input (new adoption referrals within DSS) and consequently the number of children waiting to be adopted is constantly increasing. It should also be emphasized that the problems being presented by children who are now being referred for adoption are much more complex than the problems of children who were referred for adoption even as recently as five years ago. Increasing numbers of children entering the adoption system have been exposed to the AIDS virus or born addicted to crack-cocaine. Many have extensive histories of abuse and deprivation. Many more sibling groups, older children, and minority children are being referred for adoption. Completing the adoptions of these types of children is a difficult and time-consuming endeavor.

Secondly, the introduction of changes in a complex decentralized service delivery system within a large bureaucracy inevitably involves a lag time of at least twelve to eighteen months before desired outcomes begin to be realized. It has already been noted, for example, that the initiation of a statewide adoption recruitment campaign would not produce measurable increases in the number of completed adoptions for one year or more. Similarly, changes in the assignment of adoption cases to designated social workers using a dual-assignment system would require several months to implement without wholesale transfers of cases and severe disruptions of adoption services already in process. The desired outcome of a new case assignment system (measurable increases in the number of completed adoptions) should not be expected until adoption cases have been assigned to their new social workers for at least one year.

Given the continuing growth of the DSS adoption case-load and the lag time between the introduction of changes and the realization of desired outcomes, the sooner the Department begins to implement changes the more likely the attainment of desired results.

Many of the recommendations set forth in this report are already being implemented:

* The manual inventory of children in the adoption process conducted by the DSS area offices has already heightened the awareness of DSS managers regarding the size and complexity of their adoption caseloads. Many discussions are already underway within DSS regarding how best to accomplish the adoptions of more children in a timely manner.

* Action is already being taken by the Deputy Commissioner's Office and the DSS Purchased Services Division to design and implement performance-based contracts for adoption placement services in FY93.

* Activities to facilitate the matching of existing approved pre-adoptive families with children in need of placement have been initiated by the newly-created Permanency Planning Unit in the DSS Central Office.

* An adoption specialist in the DSS Permanency Planning Unit has already begun the design of a statewide computerized registry of approved pre-adoptive families which can be implemented using existing computer hardware and software.

Other major recommendations which can be implemented without additional staff or funding include:

* administrative action to ensure legalization during FY92 of the adoptions of those children who are already placed in pre-adoptive homes and who are legally free;

* prioritization of pending legal cases in order to complete as many of these cases as possible in which children are already placed in pre-adoptive homes;

* development of realistic FY92 output objectives for all units in the adoption services system based upon the current availability of staff and other resources;

* redesign of the existing DSS computerized adoption tracking system in order to produce timely and accurate management reports regarding the status of all children in the adoption process.

These several different activities which are designed to use existing resources more efficiently will produce some increased output from the adoption services system. But such activities by themselves are insufficient to produce outputs of the desired magnitude. Tripling the output of the adoption services system can only be achieved if additional personnel are assigned to carry out adoption functions.

The Department's most critical current needs are for more legal staff and for social workers to recruit and train pre-adoptive families. Action to identify, assign, and train these additional staff should begin as soon as possible because it will take at least three months for such additional staff to be in place and functioning in their new positions. It is recommended therefore that DSS initiate an FY92 supplemental appropriation request to permit the Department to begin the process of adding these personnel to the adoption services system.

Resolution of the important policy questions concerning the definition of adoption cases and procedures for assignment of adoption cases will require several weeks of discussion within DSS and consultation with the Executive Office of Health and Human Services, Executive Office of Administration and Finance, and the Office of Employee Relations. Such discussions should begin as soon as possible to permit the resolution of these issues to be reflected in the DSS FY93 budget.

Given the complexity of the Department's adoption services system and the many different types of children who are now being referred for adoption services, improving the operation of that system is a daunting undertaking. The Department already possesses the most important ingredient to permit the success of such an undertaking --- many skilled and dedicated clinicians, attorneys, and managers who fully appreciate the importance of this endeavor in the lives of those children who will ultimately benefit from placement in stable, loving, permanent adoptive homes.

CONCLUSION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report has focused upon the number of children in DSS custody who are waiting to be adopted and has offered many recommendations regarding changes in adoption services system and the addition of resources to that system. The report has not attempted to discuss the many other important issues which confront DSS and other adoption service agencies at the present time. Such issues would include these:

* Massachusetts current adoption laws: Do these laws, which require proof of current parental unfitness and include many procedures designed to safeguard the rights of the biological parents unduly penalize the child and introduce unnecessary delays in the legal process required to free a child for adoption?

* The issue of transracial adoption: There is a national debate concerning whether children of color should be placed for adoption with white families. What efforts are adoption agencies making to identify and prepare non-white families for the adoption of children? Are such families really not available or are adoption workers just not looking very hard or in the right places?

* Is every child "adoptable?" Some children have such severe emotional and behavioral problems caused by their prior life experiences that they may be unable to attach to any family or there may be no families who are able to tolerate their level of behavioral disturbance. Are such children well-served if they remain in the adoption system? Might these children benefit more from other permanency planning options?

* Post-adoption services to adoptive families and adoptees. There is a growing recognition that the life experiences of adoptive families are different from biological families. Given the prior life experiences of adopted children and adoptive parents, these families should be expected to encounter many types of problems and experience life crises that may require assistance of various

types. What is the professional and moral responsibility of the child welfare agencies who sponsored the creation of these families to continue to provide services as adoptive families might need them?

Each of these issues mentioned on the preceding page, is worthy of extensive discussion. As the operation of the DSS adoption services system improves there will be ample opportunity to address some of these important questions.

This report has been prepared, at the direction of DSS Commissioner Gerald W. Robinson, to identify the size of the current DSS adoption population , to highlight barriers which impede the accomplishment of faster adoptions, and to offer recommendations for changes in DSS operations which may overcome some of these barriers. The report should be read by social workers and managers within DSS and its contracted adoption placement agencies and by other interested persons outside the Department. If the report leads to a better understanding of the current status of public adoption services in Massachusetts, and if some of the recommendations set forth above are implemented, the study and the report have accomplished their major objectives.

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Many different people have assisted in the study and in the preparation of this report. They deserve thanks for taking time from their already busy schedules to provide assistance in this endeavor.

* Social workers, supervisors, and managers in the 26 DSS area offices and in contracted adopton agencies completed the manual inventories of children in the adoption process and inventories of approved pre-adoptive families.

* Wayne Underwood, DSS Training Unit, developed the computer programs which permitted compilation and analysis of the inventory data.

* Gladys Arce, DSS Field Support Services, efficiently and accurately entered child data into the computer.

* Janet Watson, DSS Permanency Planning Unit, compiled and analyzed data regarding approved pre-adoptive families.

* Several DSS staff members assisted in compiling adoption data from other sources: Mary Grudzinskas and Antone Felix, Research, Evaluation and Planning Unit; Virginia Peel, Legal Division; and Steve Maloof, Staffing Analysis Unit.

* Eileen Torpey, Wayne Underwood, Janet Watson, and Michael Weekes read and commented upon early drafts of the narrative. William Warren reviewed several drafts and offered extensive advice to improve the logic and clarity of the presentation.

* Patricia Moffett designed the cover of the report and graphic presentations included in the text.

* Gladys Arce typed...and retyped...and retyped innumerable drafts of the final document.

Although many different people have contributed to this product, overall responsibility for the design of the study and preparation of the report resides with James M. Breay, DSS Coordinator of Permanency Planning Services. Responsibility for any factual errors or faulty logic should be assigned to Mr. Breay, who is also solely responsible for the organization and interpretation of data, the opinions expressed, and the recommendations set forth in this document.

SECTION 1. DATA REGARDING CHILDREN AWAITING ADOPTION

Comment on Methodology

The data which is presented in this section has been derived from a manual inventory of children in the DSS adoption process which was conducted by social workers and managers in the 26 DSS area offices and in 11 contracted private social services agencies between September and December, 1991. Inventory forms were provided to the area offices and agencies and each completed their own inventory as they were able to find the time to do so. The inventory was conducted in this manner so that it would not interfere with other more important clinical activities of the adoption staff who gathered the information.

The first two area offices to submit data completed their inventories in September. Most of the areas and private agencies completed their inventories during October and November. Five DSS area offices and one private agency did not complete their inventories until December. Two private contracted adoption agencies, Children's Services of Roxbury and Allianza Hispanica, were inadvertently omitted from the inventory process.

A social scientist would note the obvious shortcomings of this methodology. A better methodology would have required all adoption units to conduct the inventory on the same day or within the same one week period. The findings would then reflect the number of children in the adoption process at that exact point in time. Such a methodology, however, was not feasible without disrupting other important activities of the area offices and adoption agencies.

The number of children in the DSS adoption process is, if anything, undercounted because of the omission of the two private agencies and because those areas who submitted data early in the fall probably had more children in the process by the end of the calendar year. It is likely that at the end of calendar 1991 there were more than 3700 children in the DSS adoption process. The number of minority children waiting to be adopted is undoubtedly also undercounted because the two omitted private adoption agencies serve populations composed primarily of minority children.

Even though these data may not meet the requirments to qualify as scientific findings, they are sufficiently accurate for the purposes of operational planning.

TABLE 1.0 ETHNICITY AND AGES OF CHILDREN AWAITING ADOPTION

Finding: Forty-five percent of the children waiting to be adopted are white; fifty-five percent are non-white.

Finding: Forty-nine percent of these children are under age six, 43% are age six to twelve, and 7% are age thirteen and older.

Finding: The population of non-white waiting children includes a higher percentage of children under age six in comparison to the age distribution of white children awaiting adoption.

	Ages of Children							
Ethnicity	0-2	3-5	6-8	9-12	13+	Unspec.	Total	%
White	282	404	393	365	128	23	1595	45%
Black	311	355	273	197	71	19	1226	35%
Biracial	50	86	50	29	9	3	227	6%
Hispanic	73	105	93	100	15	5	391	11%
Asian	6	11	5	7	2	0	31	1%
Native American	0	2	0	6	2	0	10	<1%
Other minority	6	17	11	12	6	0	52	>1%
Nonwhite Subtotal	446	576	432	351	105	27	1937	55%
Unspecified	4	4	4	2	3	4	21	<1%
TOTAL - Number	732	984	829	718	236	54	3553	100%
Percent of Total	21%	28%	23%	20%	7%	1%	--	--
White percentage	18%	25%	25%	23%	8%	1%		
Nonwhite percent	23%	30%	22%	18%	5%	1%		

TABLE 1.1 ETHNICITY OF INDIVIDUAL CHILDREN AND CHILDREN IN SIBLING GROUPS AWAITING ADOPTION

Finding: Two-thirds of all children in the DSS adoption process are in sibling groups waiting to be adopted; one-third are individual children.

Finding: Compared with white children in the adoption process, the percentage of nonwhite children in sibling groups is significantly higher.

Ethnicity of child	Individual children	Children in sib groups	Total children
White	618	977	1595
percentage	39%	61%	100%
Black	347	879	1226
Biracial	92	135	227
Hispanic	93	298	391
Asian	7	24	31
Native American	0	10	10
Other minority	17	35	52
Nonwhite subtotal	556	1381	1937
percentage	29%	71%	100%
Unspecified	11	10	21
Total Children	1185	2368	3553
percentage	33%	67%	100%

TABLE 1.2 PLACEMENT STATUS OF CHILDREN AWAITING ADOPTION BY ETHNICITY OF CHILD

FINDING: Thirty-eight percent of all children in the DSS adoption process are currently not placed in pre-adoptive homes. Fifty-six percent of the children awaiting adoption are currently living with families who wish to adopt them.

FINDING: There is no significant difference between the percentages of white and nonwhite children who are not placed in pre-adoptive homes.

FINDING: Of the children placed in pre-adoptive homes, a higher percentage of nonwhite children are placed for adoption by relatives.

Ethnicity of Child	Not in Pre-Adopt. Home	In Pre-Adoptive Home: Relative	Foster	Recruited	Unspecified	Total children
White	622	240	447	248	38	1595
percentage	39%	15%	28%	16%	2%	100%
Black	449	310	275	63	129	1226
Biracial	101	30	52	34	10	227
Hispanic	138	112	98	31	12	391
Asian	21	2	6	2	-	31
Native Amer.	4	6	0	0	-	10
Other nonwhite	25	9	10	5	3	52
Nonwhite total	738	469	441	135	154	1937
percentage	38%	24%	23%	7%	8%	100%
Unspecified	6	2	6	2	5	21
Total number	1366	711	894	385	197	3553
percentage	38%	20%	25%	11%	6%	100%

TABLE 1.3 LEGAL STATUS OF CHILDREN AWAITING ADOPTION BY ETHNICITY OF CHILD

FINDING: Thirty-four percent of the white children in the DSS adoption process have been legally freed for adoption. Twenty-eight percent of the nonwhite children are legally free for adoption.

FINDING: There is no significant difference between the percentages of white and nonwhite children who are not yet legally free for adoption.

Ethnicity of Child	Legally Free	Not yet Free	Unspecified	Total
White	535	983	77	1595
percentage	34%	62%	5%	101%
Black	306	771	149	1226
Biracial	79	134	14	227
Hispanic	125	239	27	391
Asian	9	21	1	31
Native American	6	4	0	10
Other nonwhite	20	28	4	52
Nonwhite total	545	1197	195	1937
percentage	28%	62%	10%	100%
Unspecified	3	11	7	21
Total Children	1083	2191	279	3553
Percentage	30%	62%	8%	100%

COMMENT: THE CURRENT PLACEMENT AND LEGAL STATUS OF CHILDREN WAITING TO BE ADOPTED.

The next two tables provide data regarding the current placement and legal status of children who are in the adoption caseloads of the 26 DSS area offices and 12 private agencies who provide adoption services under contract with DSS. In the adoption inventory, each office was asked to provide information regarding each child's current placement and legal status. Information about both legal and placement status was provided for 75% of the children. Based upon that information, it is possible to identify three groups of children for priority attention:

1. Children who are legally free to be adopted who have already been placed in pre-adoptive homes. The inventory identified 777 children in this category: 605 children in DSS area office caseloads and 172 children in the caseloads of contracted adoption agencies. These should be children whose adoptions could be legalized within the next six months.

2. Children who are legally free to be adopted but who have not yet been placed in pre-adoptive homes. The inventory identified 218 of these children: 141 children in DSS adoption caseloads and 77 children in contracted adoption agency caseloads. If intensive recruitment efforts can be undertaken for these children and placements identified within six months, these are children whose adoptions could be legalized within the next 12 to 15 months.

3. Children who are already placed in pre-adoptive homes but who are not yet legally free for adoption. The inventory identified 1125 of these children: 1002 in DSS adoption caseloads and 123 in the caseloads of contracted adoption agencies. These are children who should receive priority attention from the DSS APT Team attorneys. Since many of these children have already lived with their pre-adoptive families for six months or more, many of these adoptions could be legalized as soon as the court action to terminate parental rights is concluded.

Of the total of 906 children listed as "status unspecified" in the two following tables: 88 children are legally free, placement status is not specified; 539 children are not free, placement status is not specified, and legal status is not specified for 279 children.

TABLE 1.4 PLACEMENT & LEGAL STATUS OF CHILDREN AWAITING ADOPTION SERVED BY DSS AREA OFFICES

Area Office	In Pre-Adoptive Home		Not in Pre-adoptive Home			Total
	Free	Not Free	Free	Not Free	Unspec.	
Pittsfield	12	36	5	7	7	67
Greenfield/ Northampton	17	32	0	0	20	69
Holyoke/Westfield	32	43	3	10	20	108
Springfield	70	141	29	27	16	283
Fitchburg	19	33	3	19	6	80
South Central/ Blackstone	32	19	2	9	28	90
Worcester	68	51	8	31	35	193
Lowell	21	22	1	37	25	106
Lawrence	15	22	9	6	25	77
Haverhill/Cape Ann	37	35	10	10	50	142
Lynn	9	4	6	67	73	159
Tri-City	7	13	0	4	14	38
Framingham/ Marlborough	13	20	2	7	13	55
Cambridge/ Arlington	14	35	1	11	16	77
Waltham/Newton	1	12	1	0	4	18
Quincy/Weymouth	17	16	1	5	14	53
Attleboro/Taunton	16	10	4	2	21	53
Brockton	24	28	6	24	47	129
Fall River	7	39	4	11	7	68
New Bedford	15	20	0	2	17	54
Cape/Plymouth	8	12	10	0	8	38
Morton Street	41	97	8	42	7	195
Dimock/Allston	15	39	1	24	183	262
Solomon C. Fuller	58	147	4	36	12	257
Field's Corner	15	2	21	68	75	181
Harbor/Chelsea	22	74	2	27	43	168
DSS AREA TOTALS	605	1002	141	486	786	3020

TABLE 1.5 PLACMENT AND LEGAL STATUS OF CHILDREN AWAITING ADOPTION
CHILDREN SERVED BY CONTRACTED ADOPTION AGENCIES

Agency	In Pre-Adoptive Home		Not in Pre-Adoptive Home			
	Free	Not Free	Free	Not Free	Unspec.	Total
Children's Aid & Family Serv.	18	8	5	0	13	44
Downeyside	4	4	0	0	1	9
Cath. Charities Worcestser	5	2	1	0	1	9
DARE-Beverly	14	9	6	3	10	42
Cath. Charities Merrimac Valley	9	4	1	1	15	30
DARE-Somerville	10	11	7	2	0	30
Cambridge Family & Children Svc.	16	4	8	0	6	34
Protestant Social Service Bureau	28	26	13	4	24	95
New Bedford Child & Family Service	10	9	2	15	15	51
Cath. Charities of Boston	15	22	9	2	3	51
Boston Children's Service Assoc.	18	13	2	10	10	53
Project IMPACT	25	11	23	4	22	85
CONTRACTS TOTAL	172	123	77	41	120	533

TABLE 1.6 ETHNICITY AND AGES OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Ethnicity	Number of Children	Percentage of Total
White	468	55%
Black	189	22%
Biracial	63	7%
Hispanic	96	11%
Asian	20	2%
Native American	0	--
Other Nonwhite	12	1%
Unspecified	4	<1%
TOTAL CHILDREN	852	99%

Age of Child		
0-2 years old	189	22%
3-5 years old	217	25%
6-8 years old	190	22%
9-12 years old	185	22%
Age 13 & older	66	8%
Unspecified	5	<1%
TOTAL CHILDREN	852	100%

NOTE: Almost all children in the DSS adoption process have some type of special need. For the purposes of this inventory, special needs were defined as severe physical, emotional or mental handicaps of a lasting nature. These would be the types of problems which would qualify a child to receive SSI disability payments.

Section 2. Children adopted through DSS.

The data presented in this section has been derived from reports prepared annually by the DSS Research, Evaluation, and Planning Unit. Each year, six months after the end of the fiscal year, the research unit runs an extract tape to compile information from the ASSIST consumer tracking system and authorization system regarding all children who have been adopted. The research unit waits six months to compile these data in order to ensure that all children are included and none are missed because of late data entry.

The most recent year for which data is available is FY90. Data regarding the number of adoptions completed in FY91 will not be compiled until February, 1992.

ADOPTIONS COMPLETED BY DSS FY81-FY90

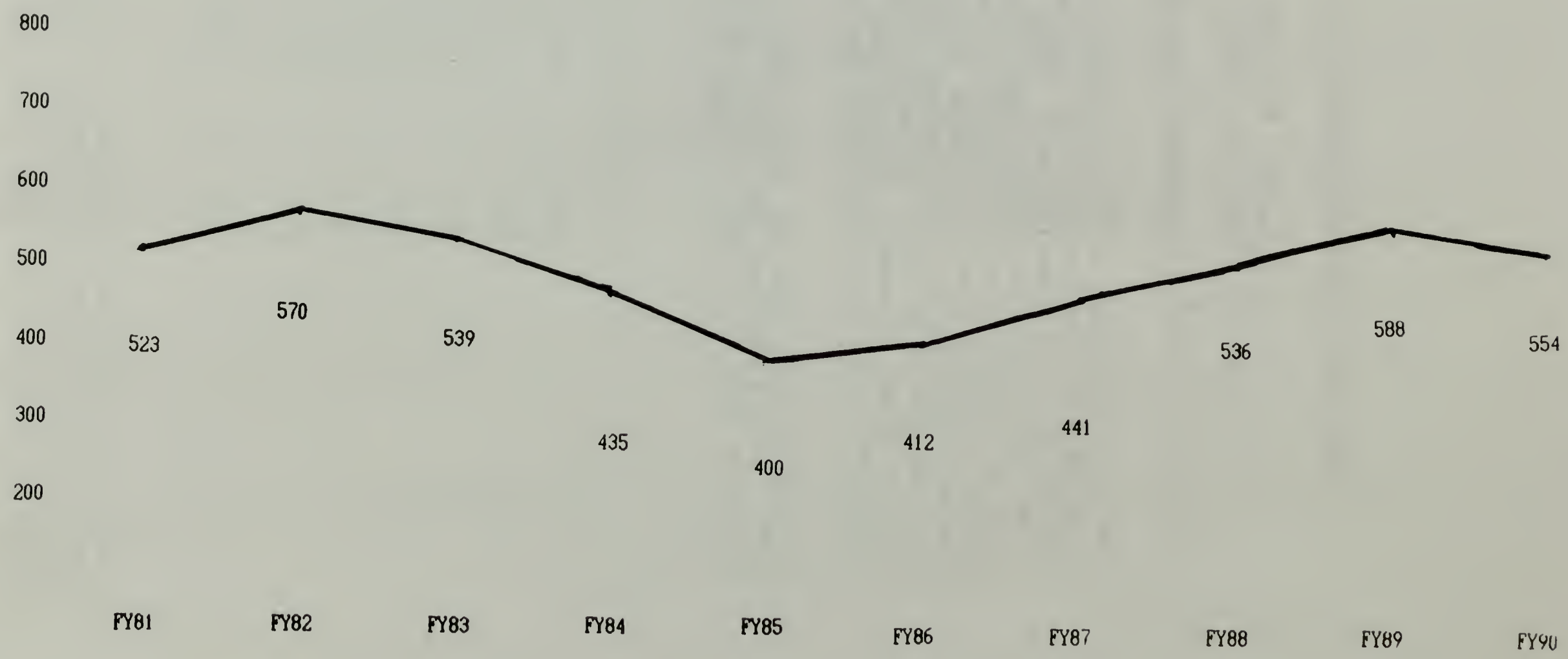

TABLE 2.1 ETHNICITY OF CHILDREN ADOPTED FY88-FY90 COMPARED TO ETHNICITY OF WAITING CHILDREN

FINDING: Sixty-nine percent of the adoptions completed by DSS from FY88 through FY90 were of white children. Thirty percent of the DSS adoptions in those three years were of nonwhite children.

FINDING: When the population of children who were adopted is compared to the population of children currently awaiting adoption, the population of adopted children includes a higher percentage of white children than the waiting population. The population of adopted children includes a lower percentage of Black and biracial children than the population of waiting children.

Ethnicity	FY88	FY89	FY90	TOTAL	Percent	% of Waiting Children
White	350	428	382	1160	69%	45%
Black/Biracial	90	72	68	230	14%	41%
Hispanic	33	49	61	143	9%	11%
Other nonwhite	53	29	31	113	7%	3%
Unspecified	10	11	12	33	2%	<1%
TOTAL	536	589	554	1679	101%	101%

TABLE 2.2 AGES OF CHILDREN ADOPTED FY88-FY90 COMPARED TO AGES OF WAITING CHILDREN

FINDING: Forty-nine percent of the children adopted from FY88 thru FY90 were less than age six. Forty-nine percent of the children waiting to be adopted are under age six.

FINDING: Ten percent of the children adopted from FY88 thru FY90 were age 13 and older. Seven percent of the children waiting to be adopted are age 13 and older.

FINDING: There is no difference in the age distribution of children who have been adopted during the past three years and the age distribution of children who are waiting to be adopted.

Age	FY88	FY89	FY90	Total	Percent	Percent of Waiting Children
0-2	135	128	117	380	23%	21%
3-5	131	161	148	440	26%	28%
6-8	112	135	128	375	22%	23%
9-12	84	105	112	301	18%	20%
13+	74	52	42	168	10%	7%
Unspec.	0	8	7	15	<1%	1%
TOTAL	536	589	554	1679	100%	100%

TABLE 2.3 CHILDREN ADOPTED BY TYPE OF HOME FY88-FY90

Year	Type of Adoptive Home: Relative	Foster Home	Recruited Home	Unspec.	Total
FY88	45	273	191	27	536
FY89	62	329	174	24	589
FY90	65	313	158	18	554
TOTAL	172	915	523	69	1679
percent	10%	55%	31%	4%	100%

TABLE 2.4 TYPE OF ADOPTIVE HOMES FY88-FY90 BY ETHNICITY OF ADOPTED CHILD

Ethnicity	Type of Adoptive Home: Relative	%	Foster Home	%	Recruited Home	%	Unspec.	Total	%
White	106	62%	629	69%	384	73%	41	1160	69%
Black	29	17%	129	14%	55	11%	17	230	14%
Hispanic	24	14%	70	8%	42	8%	7	143	9%
Other minority	11	6%	68	7%	32	6%	2	113	7%
Unspecified	2	1%	19	2%	10	2%	2	33	2%
TOTAL	172	100%	915	100%	523	100%	69	1679	100%

FINDING: White children are more likely to be adopted by recruited adoptive families than are black children. Black children and Hispanic children are more likely to be adopted by relatives than are white children.

TABLE 2.5 ADOPTIONS COMPLETED BY DSS OFFICES: FY88 THRU FY90

Area Office	Number of Completed Adoptions FY88	FY89	FY90	Waiting Children Fall, 1991
Pittsfield	3	6	8	67
Greenfield/Northampton	12	8	11	69
Holyoke/Westfield	9	23	48	108
Springfield	18	24	24	283
Fitchburg	12	10	19	80
So. Central/Blackstone	8	10	24	90
Worcester	22	26	37	193
(Regional Adoption Unit)*	54	32	3	--
Lowell	23	30	20	106
Lawrence	10	24	22	77
Haverhill/Cape Ann	43	45	36	142
Lynn	9	27	13	159
Tri-City/E.Middlesex	18	13	10	38
Framingham/Marlboro	2	9	14	55
Cambridge/Arlington	7	13	11	77
Waltham/Newton	9	12	8	18
(Regional Adoption)*	25	18	0	--
Quincy/Weymouth	7	18	10	54
Attleboro/Taunton	13	19	13	53
Brockton	29	27	18	129
Fall River	13	21	19	68
New Bedford	14	23	5	54
Cape/Plymouth	12	12	15	38
(Regional Adoption)*	4	9	2	--
Morton Street	22	16	13	195
Allston/Dimock	13	11	10	262
Solomon Carter Fuller	26	13	10	257
Field's Corner	17	12	12	181
Harbor/Chelsea	18	26	21	168
(Regional Adoption)*	15	19	3	--
DSS AREA OFFICES	487	556	459	3020
Contract Agencies*	49	33	95	533
STATEWIDE TOTAL	536	589	554	3553

* Many of the adoptions completed by contracted agencies in FY88 and FY89 were recorded against the regional adoption units. The totals for contracted agency adoptions, therefore, are misleading.

Section 3. Approved Pre-Adoptive Families

The information presented in this section was derived from manual inventories of approved families which were completed by the DSS area offices and contracted adoption agencies during the fall of 1991.

By the end of 1991 there were probably less than 353 available approved pre-adoptive families in the DSS adoption service system, because placements were made in several of these homes. There has been little new recruitment activity to bring new adoptive families into the DSS system, so it is likely that the number of placements into these homes exceeds the number of new families added to the resource pool.

TABLE 3.1 ETHNICITY OF APPROVED PRE-ADOPTIVE FAMILIES COMPARED TO THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN IN NEED OF PRE-ADOPTIVE PLACEMENTS

Ethnicity of Family	Number of Families	Percent of Total	Children Needing Placement	Percent of Total
White	308	87%	622	46%
Black	22	6%	449	33%
Biracial	9	3%	101	7%
Hispanic	12	>3%	138	10%
Other nonwhite	2	<1%	50	4%
Totals	353	100%	1360	100%

FINDING: The total of 353 available approved pre-adoptive families is far less than the 1360 children in the DSS adoption process who are not yet placed in pre-adoptive homes.

FINDING: The number of 308 white pre-adoptive families is much closer to the 622 white children in need of adoptive placement than the 45 approved minority pre-adoptive families to the 738 nonwhite children who currently need adoptive placements.

FINDING: The greatest disparity between the number of approved families and the number of children in need of placement is between the 22 Black pre-adoptive families and the 449 Black children who currently need pre-adoptive placements.

TABLE 3.2 AGES OF CHILDREN FOR WHOM PRE-ADOPTIVE FAMILIES ARE APPROVED COMPARED TO AGES OF CHILDREN IN NEED OF ADOPTIVE PLACEMENT

Ethnicity of Pre-Adoptive Family	Ages of Children Approved For: 0-1 yr old	Ages 1-5	Age 6-10	Age 10 & older
White	199	231	105	26
Black	12	17	4	1
Biracial	8	7	1	0
Hispanic	10	6	0	0
Other minority	0	2	0	0
Totals	229	263	110	27
Number of Children Needing Placement	35	565	497	251

TABLE 3.3 TYPES OF CHILDREN WHOM APPROVED FAMILIES WOULD CONSIDER

	Children who would be considered:		
Family ethnicity	Minority child	Sibling group	Special needs child
White (308)	52	141	101
Black (22)	22	12	9
Biracial (9)	9	3	4
Hispanic (12)	12	2	1
Other minority (2)	2	1	1
Totals (353)	96	160	116
Waiting Children Not in Placement	738	437	388

TABLE 3.4 APPROVED PRE-ADOPTIVE FAMILIES BY OFFICE & FAMILY ETHNICITY

Office	White	Black/ Biracial	Hispanic	Other	Total
Pittsfield	16	0	0	0	16
Greenfield/Nor.	20	1	0	0	21
Holyoke/West.	29	1	8	0	38
Springfield	15	3	0	0	18
Fitchburg	31	2	0	0	33
So. Central	36	0	1	0	37
Worcester	8	0	0	0	8
Lowell	2	0	0	0	2
Lawrence	5	0	0	0	5
Haverhill/CA	9	0	0	0	9
Tri-City	7	1	0	0	8
Framingham/Marl.	17	1	0	0	18
Cambridge/Arl.	8	0	1	0	9
Fall River & Attleboro	14	0	0	0	14
Brockton	2	0	0	0	2
New Bedford	3	0	0	0	3
Cape/Plymouth	15	1	0	1	17
Morton Street	3	1	1	0	5
Field's Corner	3	0	0	0	3
CA&FS	12	0	0	0	12
Downeyside	19	6	1	0	26
Cath. Char. MV	11	0	0	0	11
NBFS	4	1	0	0	5
DARE-Somerville	2	1	0	0	3
Camb. Fam & Chn.	10	11	0	0	21
BCSA	7	1	0	0	8
TOTAL	308	31	12	2	353

Section 4. Adoption workload of the DSS Legal Division

The data presented in the following tables was derived from a tracking system maintained by the DSS Legal Division on a personal computer. All legal events--referrals, case conferences, case filings, trial dates, etc.---are recorded on the PC. These data have been derived from that system.

TABLE 4.1 ADOPTION CASES REFERRED TO DSS LEGAL DIVISION

Finding: From FY87 to FY91 the number of adoption cases referred to the APT Team increased by 66% from 506 cases in FY87 to 838 cases in FY91.

Finding: From FY87 to FY91 the number of children referred increased by 147%. Adoption cases now being referred for legal action include many more children in sibling groups.

Year	Cases Referred	Children Referred
FY87	506	678
FY88	549	821
FY89	574	971
FY90	600	1021
FY91	838	1456

Table 4.2 Chapter 210 Cases Completed by DSS Attorneys

Finding: The output of the APT Team (completed Chapter 210 cases filed in Probate Court) decreased by 10% from FY90 to FY91. During FY91 adoption attorneys were assigned to handle other legal work because of staffing vacancies in the DSS legal division.

	FY90	FY91
210 petition allowed	419	388
210 petition denied or withdrawn	53	39
Total completed	472	427
Children Freed	684	638

TABLE 4.3 PENDING WORKLOAD OF DSS ADOPTION ATTORNEYS

Finding: The pending workload of the APT Team increased by 53% from FY90 to FY91.

Finding: Significant backlogs have developed in the number of cases referred but not conferenced and the number of cases conferenced but not filed in court.

Workload status as of:	10/90	10/91
Case referred, not conferenced	87	287
Conferenced, not filed	97	152
Filed, not yet allowed	586	740
Cases Pending	770	1179

TABLE 4.4 CHAPTER 210 CASES FILED BY OFFICE AS OF 12/31/91

Finding: Twenty percent of all Chapter 210 cases currently filed in Probate Courts have been pending for 18 months or more.

Office	Total Cases	(Children)	Pending > 18 mos.	Percent > 18 mos.
Pittsfield	11	(21)	5	45%
Greenfield/North.	16	(35)	1	6%
Holyoke/Westfield	25	(50)	5	20%
Springfield	26	(47)	8	31%
Fitchburg	26	(52)	6	23%
So. Central/Blackstone	17	(37)	6	35%
Worcester	29	(59)	11	38%
Lowell	27	(41)	3	11%
Lawrence	33	(57)	3	9%
Haverhill	49	(91)	16	33%
Lynn	43	(65)	9	21%
Tri-City	16	(33)	3	19%
Framingham/Marlboro	16	(39)	4	25%
Cambridge/Arlington	19	(33)	2	10%
Waltham/Newton	14	(18)	6	43%
Quincy/Weymouth	16	(26)	2	12%
Attleboro/Taunton	16	(33)	3	19%
Brockton	51	(92)	13	25%
Fall River	27	(47)	8	30%
New Bedford	24	(40)	6	25%
Cape/Plymouth	12	(17)	1	8%
Morton Street	22	(39)	2	9%
Dimock/Allston	40	(76)	3	7%
Solomon Carter Fuller	43	(64)	4	9%
Field's Corner	15	(35)	4	27%
Harbor/Chelsea	29	(57)	5	17%
Contract Agencies	89	(175)	15	17%
TOTALS	751	(1379)	154	20%

Section 5. Information on DSS Adoption Workload and Staffing

The information presented in the following four tables was derived from the inventory and combined with data provided by the DSS staffing analysis unit.

An adoption case was considered to be an individual child or a sibling group in the adoption process. The number of active adoption cases for each DSS area office was calculated from the inventory.

The number of FTE adoption workers was determined by using an 18:1 caseload ratio.

The number of adoption workers currently assigned cases in each area office was provided by the Staffing Analysis Unit.

TABLE 5.1 CURRENT ADOPTION STAFFING AND STAFF NEEDED TO COVER ALL CASES

Offices which do not use a dual-assignment system.

Area Office	Total Cases	FTE's Needed	Current FTE's	Cases Assigned	Added Staff Needed
Solomon C. Fuller	153	8.5	3.0	67	5.5
Springfield	140	8.0	4.0	83	4.0
Allston/Dimock	134	7.5	1.5	23	6.0
Morton Street	120	7.0	2.0	41	5.0
Field's Corner	107	6.0	2.0	33	4.0
Harbor/Chelsea	101	6.0	2.0	31	4.0
Holyoke/Westfield	67	4.0	4.5	61	-
Fitchburg	52	3.0	0	0	3.0
Greenfield/ Northampton	40	2.5	2.0	18	0.5
Pittsfield	38	2.0	0.5	7	1.5
Totals	952	54.5	21.5	364	33.5

TABLE 5.2 CURRENT ADOPTION STAFFING AND STAFF NEEDED TO COVER ALL CASES

Offices which use a dual-assignment system

Area office	Total Cases	FTE's Needed	Current FTE's	Cases Assigned	Added Staff Needed
Worcester	108	6.0	4.5	39	1.5
Haverhill/Cape Ann	100	6.0	2.5	57	3.5
Lynn	100	6.0	1.0	28	5.0
Brockton	72	4.0	3.5	64	0.5
Lowell	59	3.5	3.0	15	0.5
Lawrence	52	3.0	1.5	33	1.5
So. Central/ Blackstone	48	3.0	2.0	37	1.0
Fall River	39	2.0	1.6	34	0.4
Cambridge/Arl.	37	2.0	2.0	32	-
New Bedford	35	2.0	1.5	24	0.5
Attleboro/Taunton	34	2.0	2.5	35	-
Quincy/Weymouth	31	2.0	2.0	38	-
Framingham/Marlboro	31	2.0	2.0	24	-
Cape/Plymouth	27	1.5	2.5	29	-
Tri-City	23	1.5	1.0	10	0.5
Waltham	16	1.0	2.0	27	-
Totals	812	47.5	35.1	526	14.9

TABLE 5.3 ADDED ONGOING SOCIAL WORKERS NEEDED FOR DUAL-ASSIGNMENT SYSTEM

Offices which do not now use dual-assignment of adoption cases.

Area Office	Total Cases	70% Not Free	Added Ongoing Workers
Solomon Carter Fuller	153	107	6.0
Springfield	140	98	5.5
Allston/Dimock	134	94	5.0
Morton Street	120	84	4.5
Field's Corner	107	75	4.0
Harbor/Chelsea	101	70	4.0
Holyoke/Westfield	67	47	3.0
Fitchburg	52	36	2.0
Greenfield/Northampton	40	28	1.5
Pittsfield	38	27	1.5
Totals		666	37.0

TABLE 5.4 ADDED ONGOING SOCIAL WORKERS NEEDED FOR DUAL-ASSIGNMENT SYSTEM

Offices which now use dual-assignment of adoption cases.

Area Office	Total Cases	MINUS	Cases Assigned	=		70% Not Free	Added Ongoing Workers
Worcester	108	-	39	=	69	48	3.0
Haverhill/ Cape Ann	100	-	57	=	43	30	2.0
Lynn	100	-	28	=	72	50	3.0
Brockton	72	-	64	=	8	6	0
Lowell	59	-	15	=	45	32	2.0
Lawrence	52	-	33	=	19	14	1.0
So. Central/ Blackstone	48	-	37	=	11	8	0.5
Fall River	39	-	34	=	5	4	0
Cambridge/ Arlington	37	-	32	=	7	5	0
New Bedford	35	-	24	=	11	8	0.5
Attleboro/Taunton	34	-	35	=	0	0	0
Quincy/Weymouth	31	-	38	=	0	0	0
Framingham/ Marlboro	31	-	24	=	7	5	0
Cape/Plymoutn	27	-	29	=	0	0	0
Tri-City	23	-	10	=	13	9	0.5
Waltham	16	-	27	=	0	0	0
Totals						218	12.5